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India Today June-July 1982 G.K.U.

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TODAY

THE COMPLETE NEWSMAGAZINE

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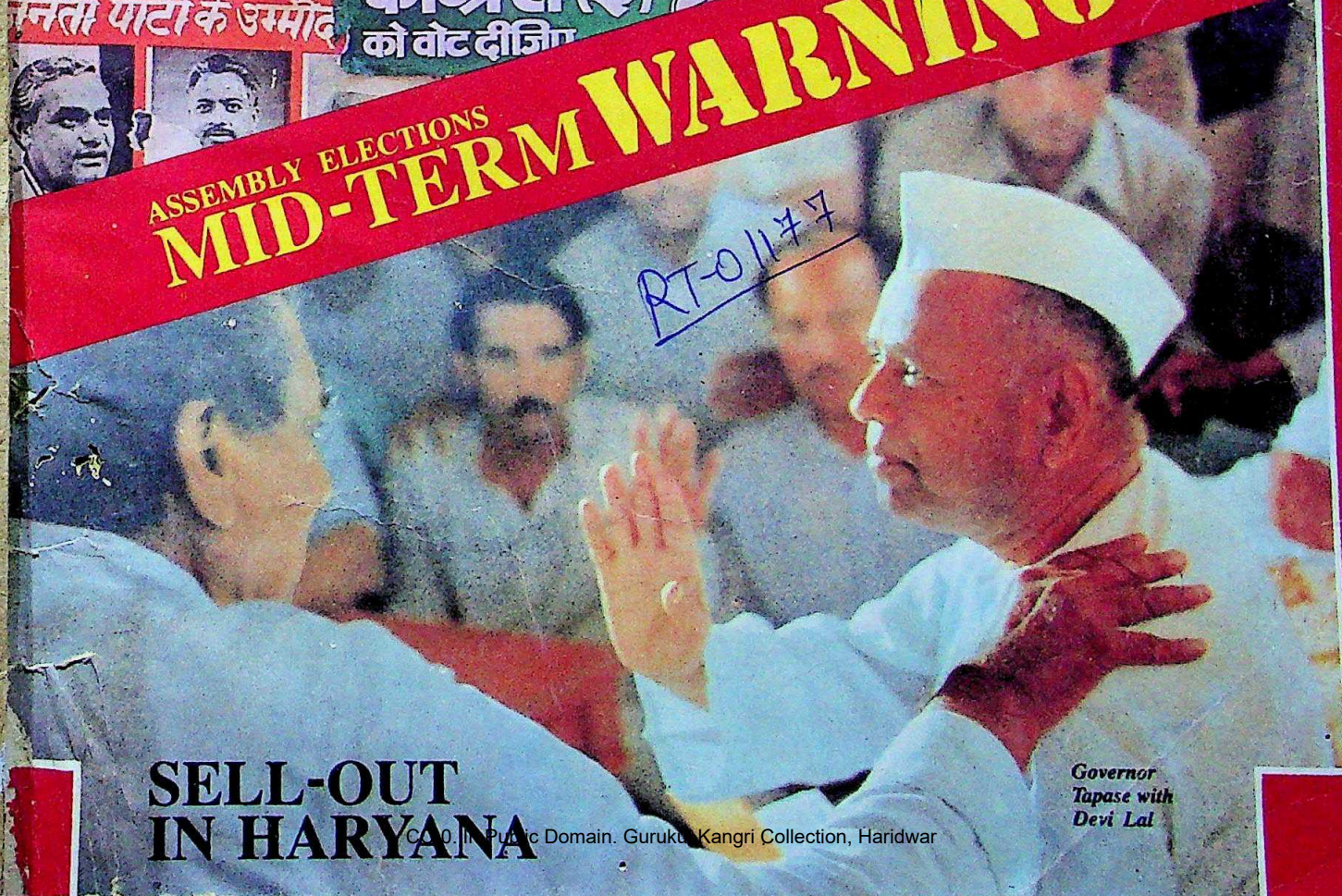


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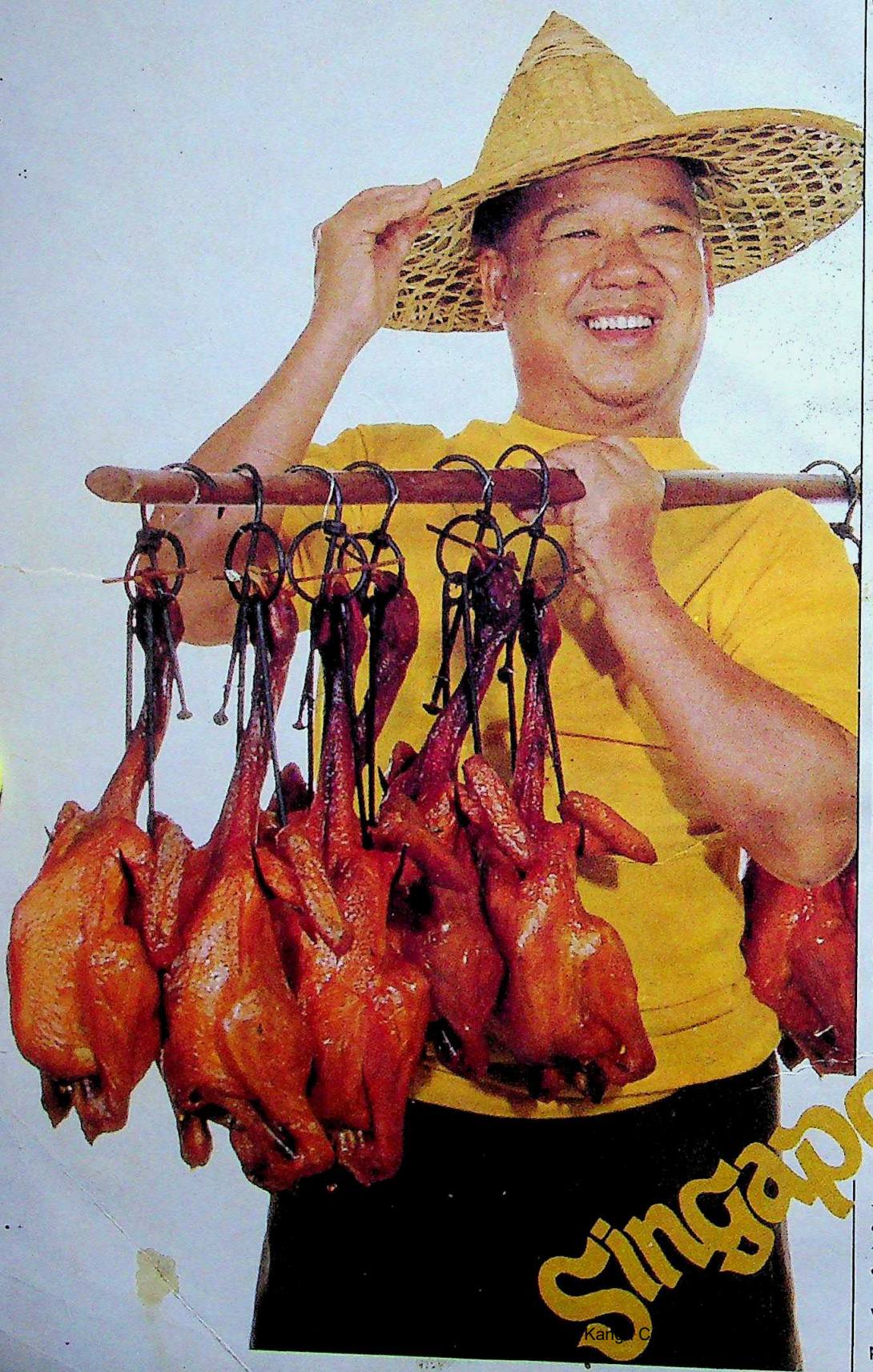
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Governor Tapase with Devi Lal

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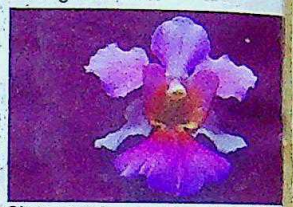
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THE COMPLETE NEWSMAGAZINE

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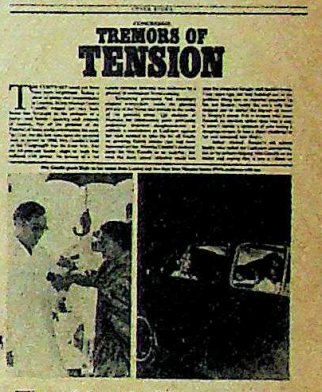
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

THE BEST of intentions go awry sometimes. That aphorism has struck home at INDIA TODAY *where the effort to do a job better and more carefully has twice in recent weeks been interpreted to mean just the opposite. Last fortnight, as a media story on page 108 of this issue explains, a Delhi judge delivered a key judgement that struck down what amounted to the first instance of prior judicial restraint on the Indian media.* INDIA TODAY*'s case with Charanjit Singh, Congress(I)* MP*, which ran the gauntlet of the lower courts, was in fact born of an endeavour to do a journalistic job with a sense of professionalism. It is all too easy to collect facts about a person and publish without seeking out the individual concerned. But it is obviously good journalism to give the main participants in any story a chance to have their say. It was with this in mind that Correspondent* CHAITANYA KALBAG *framed a questionnaire and sent it to Singh, a fast-growing businessman and politician, to solicit his views and make for a balanced report. It is ironic then that this simple act of responsible reporting should have embroiled the magazine in a time-consuming courtroom battle which is still continuing.*

IN THE second instance INDIA TODAY *has been accused in some circles of printing two separate versions of a cover story with the devious intent of currying favour with the prime minister. The story in question, "Tremors Of Tension", April 15, 1982, was put together under the twin pressure of a looming deadline and a fast-moving story, a mix which probably offers periodicals their biggest challenge. It isn't always easy to handle fast-moving stories in a magazine which appears once in a fortnight, and it's harder if the events occur close to deadline. In "Tremors Of Tension," the villain of the piece was the Lucknow convention addressed by Maneka Gandhi on March 28 and events that followed in quick succession—her dramatic departure from 1 Safdarjung Road on March 29 and her press conference on March 30.*



The March 30 event carried in the April 1–15 issue

Events occurring on these dates are usually too late for the next issue which has to be on the stands all over the country on the 1st of the following month. In this case, however, INDIA TODAY *re-arranged production schedules in order to accommodate the latest developments. Even so, room for manoeuvre was limited. The bulk of the story, running to a total of 10 pages, was made ready by March 28 with arrangements made to incorporate a 1,200-word report on the convention itself that night. Maneka's well-publicised departure from Mrs Gandhi's home the next night was an event of sufficient significance to call for incorporation in the story. That night, two pictures of her departure were incorporated in the story and the presses began to print. Next morning, on March 30, Maneka gave a press conference and the first six paragraphs of the story were changed to include this. Meanwhile, about 20,000 copies had been printed.*

One result of this was the inclusion of news of March 30 for the bulk of the copies in an issue which hit the stands on April 1—no mean achievement. Another unexpected fall-out was to set tongues wagging that INDIA TODAY *had printed two separate editions of the same issue. One, said the wags, was favourable to Mrs Gandhi and intended to please her. The other was for general circulation around the country and had a less complimentary version of the same events. Just shows you can't win them all.*

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OADCASTING BLUES

"The Tedium Is The Message" (May depicted in detail the sorry state of ordarshan. Considering that TV can be a verful organ of instruction, it is amazing t the Government consistently bungles in ndling it.

cutta *Pinaki Chakraborti*

The cover story failed to suggest any crete steps for the reformation of Doorshan. It is unfortunate that Vasant Sathe s not intend to use the profits made by the -based programmes to recruit and enrage artists.

Delhi *Sandeep Kapur*

ON IN WINTER

We must see "Britain's Last Stand" y 31) in the light of at least three United ions resolutions acknowledging Argen-'s sovereignty over the Falkland Islands urging Britain to peacefully settle the ter. There is also the Colombo nonned summit resolution along these lines. the British lion, though old and shorn of s and nails, still roars—albeit with US .

Delhi *Dr S.P. Shukla*

HAWKS AND DOVES

A thread of mutual suspicion runs th-h the story of the no-war pact ("Double-Diplomacy", May 15). Fortunately, ver, this is restricted to a governmental The people of both our countries want e and foreign policy must reflect this e. It is time that the Indian Government unced its hawkish posture and started ding on development rather than nce.

makudi *G. Parthsarathy*

The break-up of their country seems to e matured the Pakistanis. It's a pity that maturity is lacking in India. We can't to behave realistically as far as the rest he world is concerned. Why else do we condemn the naked Soviet aggression in anistan? We have as much to lose by the presence of a superpower in the subcontinent as Pakistan. It's time we stopped behaving like the odd man out in Asia.

Calcutta *Mihir Bain*

■ Where is the guarantee that a no-war pact will improve relations between India and Pakistan? After all, the Simla Agreement has not changed the attitudes of either side. Until Pakistan repositions itself on Kashmir, no amount of pacts will have effect.

Rohtak *Mukesh Sharma*

■ The important question now is whether the leaders of our two countries are really interested in a no-war pact—especially a military dictator who has no popular sanction backing his rule. It would be more convenient for him to play on the people's fears and therefore buttress his own regime.

Howrah *Partha Pratim Banerji*

■ The cover story ends by saying: "Any reconciliatory gesture will carry more weight and credibility if it emanates from the big brother." This is exactly the nub of the matter: when has Pakistan ever accepted India as the big brother?

New Delhi *Dr Chander Mohini*

■ The interview with General Zia was interesting. But the answers from the Pakistani president were too pat. Obviously his plan is to go ahead with an occupation of the disputed parts of Kashmir while waving a no-war pact in all international forums.

Rourkela *Rana Dasgupta*

FORCEFUL REPLIES

If the original intention for forming the Special Frontier Force (SFF) (to liberate Tibet) is still relevant now ("School For Scandal," May 15) something must be done to refurbish the image. The morale of the force is at the lowest ebb. Many Tibetans who joined the force with the aim of fighting on the borders with Chinese are discouraged and now seeking discharge.

Dharamsala *Karma Gyatsho*

■ Mention should have been made of the Tibetan troops in the SFF who are not in fighting form and are highly indisciplined. The Tibetan youths are not interested in the military life nor are they interested in any kind of liberation. The biggest drawback of the SFF is that all the senior officers are superseded and re-employed. These officers do not have the courage to project the correct picture to higher authorities.

99 APO *Major M.P. Singh*

INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM

Splendid news! INDIA TODAY International should make a difference in the quantity and coverage of news about India in the US. Congratulations for this bold venture.

United States *C. Alex Alexander* MD

■ I was hoping that somebody would start distributing INDIA TODAY in America. I'm sure that this venture will be a great success.

United States *Bhamy V. Shenoy*

■ Thank you for making INDIA TODAY available in the US. It is an excellent magazine and I enjoy reading it.

United States *Dr Neel C. Sekhar*

AIRING A DIFFERENCE

The item appearing in "In The Air" (April 30) that Pakistani military personnel have been taken to Diego Garcia is not factually correct. We can state unequivocally that there have been no visits to Diego Garcia. The US Government maintains very strict control of all visitors to its naval facility on the island. I can assure you that no visits by Pakistani military personnel have taken place, nor can we envision circumstances under which visits would occur in the future.

New Delhi *William D. Miller*
Press Attache, United States Embassy.

MARKET VALUES

In the interview, "Angre Is Not For Sale" (May 15) Sardar Angre is quoted as saying that: "We decided on him (M.V. Kamath) just 10 days ago. We don't want the magazine to follow the party line and so we employed Kamath." This is to inform that Kamath is under nobody's employ, neither Sardar Angre's nor *Surya*'s. I agreed to be its consulting editor and am not in its pay nor on its regular staff. I treasure my independence. That is not for hire.

Bombay *M.V. Kamath*

■ Sardar Angre would have us believe that his buying *Surya* is a purely business proposition and M.V. Kamath will be neutral. For anybody who has read Kamath's invectives against the ruling party in the *Illustrated Weekly* this makes pitiful reading. Far from being an apolitical, this decision makes clear that the requirement that had to be fulfilled is that of having an anti-Mrs Gandhi stance.

Bombay *Dr K.N. Varde*

WASTED DREAMS

The article "Wasted Efforts" (May 15) is grossly misleading. John Choppala should not have been referred to as a bio-chemist. For that one needs a Ph.D. which Choppala does not have. Secondly, if the Choppalas spent Rs 15 lakh on the project it should be known that not a paisa was from their own

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pocket. Each student has taken a 25 per cent loss on the money they paid and for a foreign student like myself that is a loss of Rs 35,000. And now that the project is on its last legs the Choppalas and D.N. Peter refuse to give an account of their expenditure to the students. For a foreigner of Indian origin like myself, my first visit to the land of my forefathers has been a traumatic one.

Bhubaneswar *Shivanam Moosaie*

SIZING UP THE THREAT

It would be a pity if the article "The Island Scare" (May 15) is taken seriously enough to give a further fillip to the already prodigal expenditure on new defence acquisitions in the mistaken belief that there exist serious deficiencies in our naval capability.

Plans for defence of our island possessions should continue to be based primarily on the garrison concept inclusive of island-based naval and air units. Essentially the country neither needs nor is ready to extend its naval responsibilities to cover far-flung areas. Defence of our coastal assets must continue to be the primary objective for which the navy needs to concentrate on relatively short range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine capability, missile boats and attack submarines.

In this context because of the availability of land-based airpower, our one and only aircraft carrier has been totally irrelevant in the past and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future. Many an admiral will, I suspect, heave a sigh of relief when this albatross round their neck which has long drained their resources and inhibited their freedom of thought and action is decently retired.

Bombay *J. Zaheer*, Air Marshal (Retd)

■ The article was timely and it is to be hoped that the Government takes note of it. Frequent military, naval and air exercises must be carried out in these islands and they must be physically occupied by troops. Coastal batteries and anti-heliborne defences should be put up. In matters of defence the old edict, possession is nine-tenths of the law, is only too true. It's about time we paid attention to the strategic importance of these islands.

Trivandrum *Dylis Shankar*

TAKING STOCK

In "Kerala's Cashless Crop" (May 15) rawnut production/stock figures and cashew kernel sale/stock figures in tonnes have been quoted without clarifying that the production of cashew kernels is only 22 to 25 per cent of the rawnut supply. This creates a wrong impression regarding the present stock position and value thereof and the magnitude of the crisis being experience the industry.

Bombay *Pankaj N. Sa*

IMPORTANCE OF EXPERTISE

I was very glad to read "Who's Mi The Store" (May 15) as it touched on a which is all to often regarded as a non- I agree with the view expressed that the of industry must be conscious of the nological aspect of its product and only can there be successful industrialisation the flaw in the article lies in the fact tha author has not taken note of any public sector enterprises which ma two-thirds of our investments in the porate sector.

Bombay *P.S.*

■ It would appear that the sample panies chosen and the cut-off criterion 1 lakh salary and above are arbitrary an as random as the author would hav believe. In a research paper publishe *Business India* a survey of 75 large comp and 800 top managers concluded that 3 cent of all top Indian managers are engi and technologists. This is as against 1 cent in the US.

Calcutta *P.K. Moha*

DOUSING THE SPARK

It is really a tragedy that we have to excellent creative artiste like Kamales to please a herd of dull unimaginative rupt officials ("A Slow Fade-out" May Kamaleshwar was the only lively spark otherwise dreary Doordarshan.

Bombay *Bhaskar S.*

SELLING POINTS

The review of the book on Rajiv Ga "Utterly Butterly" (May 15) was exce With the growing sycophancy in this co the sale of this book should be no prob high price or not.

Lucknow *Dhiresh Bah*

■ I disagree with the reviewer that book is like a baby book. If this had be it would have featured only R Gandhi—but it does much more. A com picture of Indian village is also availab

Chandigarh *Sudesh Ku*

OPTING OUT

In "A Conflict Of Interests" (April has been mentioned that falling in line the United Arab Emirates' purported p Al Futtaim decided not to renew the tracts of several top Indian execu among the group, myself. This is incor gave notice to Al Futtaim as I did not wi continue after my contract had expire

Bombay *S.B. Budh*

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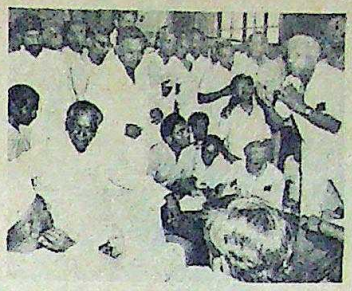
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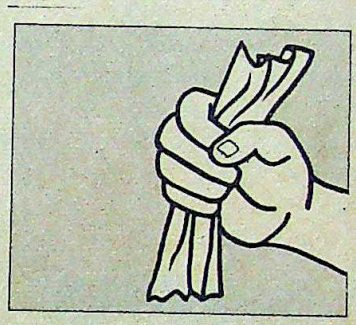
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Religion
Rajneesh: Sins Of Bhagwan
Eye-catchers



COVER STORY: Last fortnight's mini-election in four states was fraught with significance for the future. As the results revealed, though the Congress(I) managed to retain its rule on three states, its hold was at best a tenuous one. It was, from the point of view of the electorate, a mid-term warning that the ruling party cannot ignore. It was in Haryana, however, that elections were reduced to a tragic and disgraceful farce. **Page 17**

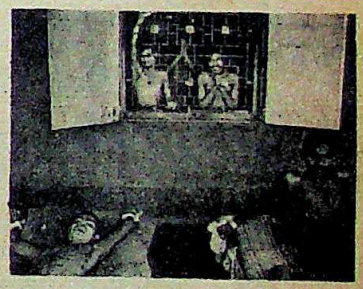
CURRENT EVENTS: With the solid support of 472 MPs and 2,552 MLAs, Congress(I) seems set to win the presidential election due in July. The opposition parties, however, were trying to demolish Congress(I)'s fortress by raising the demand for a consensus candidate belonging to the minority community. An in depth analysis of the voting strength of both the ruling and opposition parties. **Page 34**





ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY: Over a quarter of Indian industry has been hit by a slump in demand: items ranging from trucks to textiles, and fertilisers to steel, suddenly have no market. Industrialists blame the credit squeeze, allegedly the severest in over a decade. But the real problem could be much deeper, and more complex. And the year of productivity could turn out to be something else altogether. An in-depth report. **Page 64**

PHOTO FEATURE: The Ranchi Mansik Arogyashala, one of the largest mental hospitals in Asia, is a sad commentary on mental asylums in India. Crawling with decay and despair, the 1,580-bed hospital meets very few of the essential requirements for its mentally ill patients. A horrifying scenario forms the backdrop to this dungeonesque place. A report with dramatic photographs of the asylum. **Page 86**





SPECIAL FEATURE: The Himalayas have been conquered once again, but in the most unusual way. Last fortnight, a four-man expedition of the Indian army succeeded in traversing the entire Himalayan range, a distance of 8,000 km covered in 475 days. As a saga of human endurance, the Trans-Himalayan Expedition stands by itself. **Page 104**

RELIGION: One year and one visa extension later, the saffron guru Rajneesh has applied for permanent residence from the US immigration authorities, who have promptly started an investigation into his antecedents. Meanwhile the controversial guru has left heavy tax liabilities behind along with cases of insurance frauds and criminal offences. A report on the Bhagwan's sins. **Page 135**



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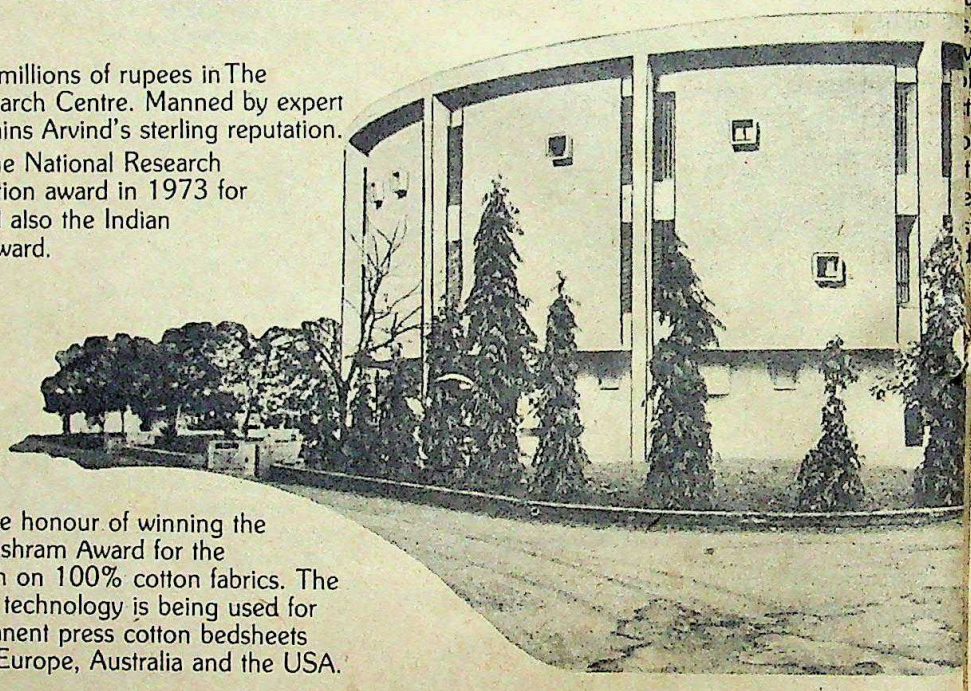
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The Centre has also the honour of winning the prestigious Hari Om Ashram Award for the Permanent Press Finish on 100% cotton fabrics. The permanent press finish technology is being used for Arvind's famous permanent press cotton bedsheets which are exported to Europe, Australia and the USA.

Arvind sows a seed of prosperity—Ank and reaps a harvest of smiles and goodw



Arvind Mills infused new life into 'Ankur erstwhile Lakshmi Cotton Mills that had to close due to financial and marketing problems. a year, 'Ankur' turned the corner to show a

What matters more is that 1700 mill could go back to work. That alone has worth the thirty million rupees Arvind in to set the mill r

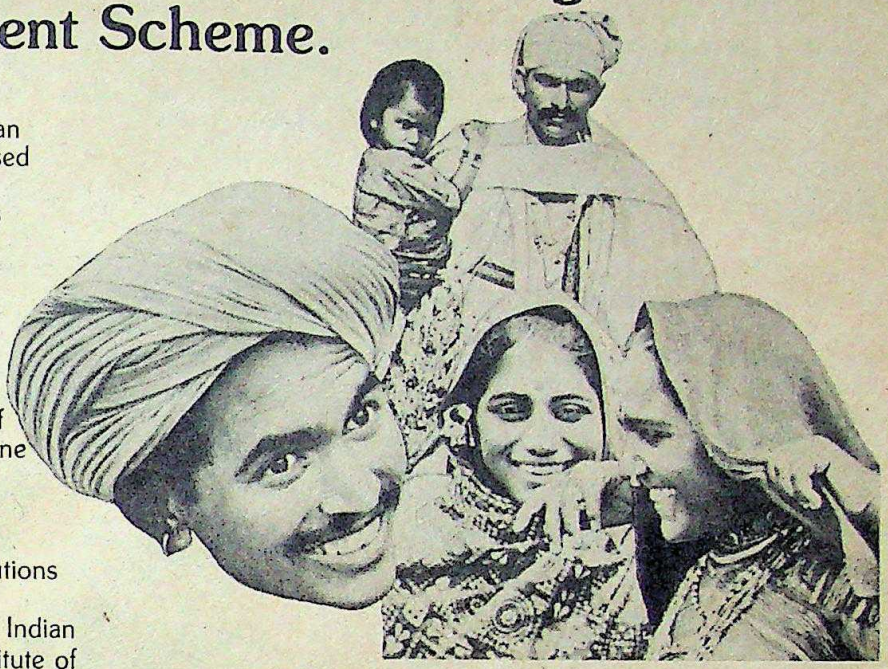
Today, Ankur Textile Mills stands a h plant. Arvind nurtured the see

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The heart of the matter-Arvind's integrated Rural Development Scheme.



Arvind Mills is aware of its responsibilities towards society. It has an integrated rural uplift plan which is based on the principle of self help. Arvind helps the villagers organise themselves to procure bank loans and aid towards this achievement. Arvind provides the management skills and aid in all facets of the village life from nutrition, education to electrification and total agricultural services.

Out of Arvind's aggregate donations of Rs. 86 lakhs, a sizable amount has gone towards setting up and promotion of colleges, educational institutes and activities at Ahmedabad.

Some of the famous educational institutions with which Arvind is associated are, the L.D. Engineering College, the Indian Institute of Management, the L.D. Institute of Indology and the L.D. Arts College, Ahmedabad.



Sri Lanka and Nigeria opt for Arvind's management expertise.

United Spinning Mills of Sri Lanka scouted the world for management expertise - and chose Arvind—makers of quality textiles for half a century.

Soon, Arvind experts will be running the Gaskiya Textile Mills in Nigeria - more proof of recognition of Arvind's excellence.

Arvind's progressive management and its commitment to high quality is a byword in the textile industry in India.

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SEARCHING FOR A SITE

THE PAKISTAN Government's bid to carry out an experimental atomic explosion on the Chinese ranges in Tibet has run into a snag. According to sources, negotiations with the Chinese leadership are said to have floundered. Now the Pakistanis are said to be desperately trying to choose between the limited number of sites in their own country. Their search has acquired urgency especially since intelligence sources have confirmed that Pakistan will have capability of a delivery system in the form of F-16s by 1983.

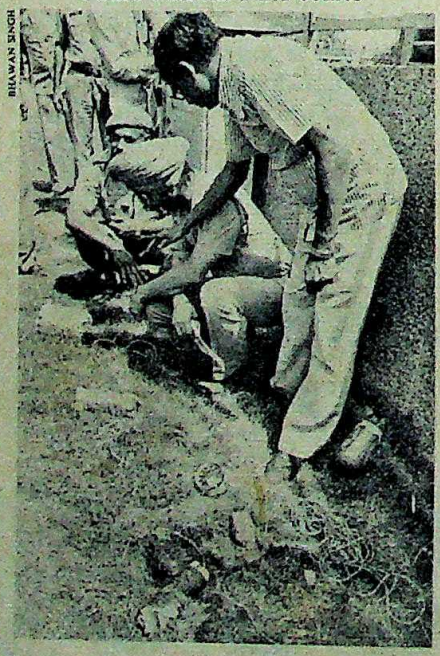
TONING IT DOWN

NO INTERNATIONAL sporting event is free of political hurdles and the Asian Games scheduled to take place in New Delhi this November is no exception. However, the first of its hurdles regarding which countries to invite to the Games seems to have been overcome with only token resistance. Last fortnight, the Asian Games Committee extended invitations to all the countries that come under the geographical embrace of Asia with two exceptions—Israel and Kampuchea. Israel was expected but Kampuchea is a prickly question since India officially recognises the Heng Samrin regime while other members of the Asian Federation do not. Kampuchea's inclusion in the Games would have meant possible pull-outs, especially by countries in South-east Asia. To avoid further eruptions of the Israel question, India has spearheaded a move that Israel should in future be included in the European sector as far as future international sporting events are concerned.

MISREADING THE MESSAGE

THE ACCIDENTAL discovery of three time bombs placed in Palika Bazaar, the huge underground market in the heart of the capital, last week had a bizarre prelude. A week earlier, the Intelligence Bureau had tipped off the Centre about possible terrorist activity by the PLA (People's Liberation Army), the extremist Manipur organisation. However, by the time the alert was passed on to the Special Branch of the Delhi Police it was wrongly misread as PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) and connected to the visit of PLO leader Yasser Arafat. Once Arafat had left, the Special Branch cancelled the alert. Days later, the bombs were discovered and claimed by the PLA only then did they realise the extent of their goof. However, the threat is still not defused. According to intelligence sources, the PLA has recently stepped up terrorist activity in Manipur and plan to extend their acts of terrorism to other parts of India.

Police with the PLA bombs



POLITICAL HURDLES

MRS GANDHI is restraining criticism of the United S preparation for her forthcoming visit to Was Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasse who had bitterly attacked the US Administration from Indi for playing a "subversive role" in West Asia failed to get an of criticism or condemnation in the joint communique iss the end of his visit. There was no reference to the US at all



Arafat and Mrs Gandhi in New Delhi: no US-baiting

communique and South Block saw to it that even the Indian was not mentioned since Arafat would then insist on a d for elimination of the Diego Garcia base. Mrs Gandhi ha lately avoiding any unkind references to the US in her spe

NO BARTERS FOR BEIJING

THE CHINESE team which came to Delhi for border said to have rejected outright the historical records pr by India claiming certain portions now under Chinese occu The Chinese also put across their view that the Aksai Ch belonged to them, and could not be bartered.

The Chinese team suggested that delicate negotiations border should be tackled only at the political level and th could be no cartographic solution to the dispute. They also r their invitation to External Affairs Minister P.V. Narasim to visit Beijing. The Chinese also let drop hints that once th were sorted out at the political level the two sides could m higher political plane, meaning of course a summit betwe Indira Gandhi and Deng Xiaoping.

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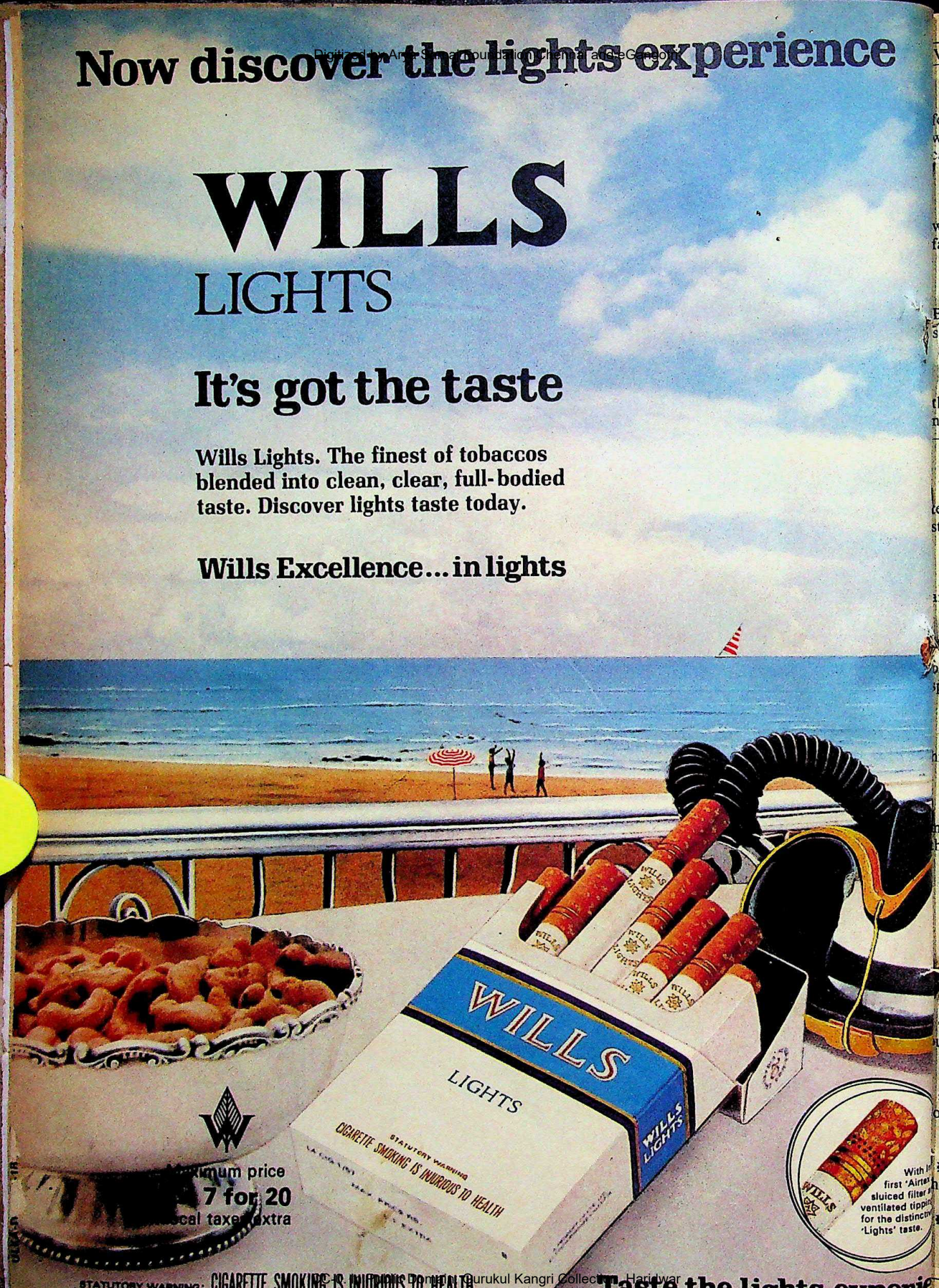
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Taste the lights experie

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» The Congress(I) is a party of authoritarian feudalism represented by Mrs Gandhi's family, but which has entered an alliance with landlords, capitalists and business groups....
—*Ashok Mitra in* Debonair

» (In the ad profession) you get people who can't walk a straight line without talking the jargon and falling over their feet.
—*Frank Simoes in* Gentlemen

» She (Mrs Gandhi) wants to throw me out. But, I am not an Antulay or Anjiah who sits or stands at her bidding... I cannot kowtow to her.
—*Sheikh Abdullah in* Sunday

» I am a frail woman, but I do not know why the BJP and Marxist leaders are after me... I do not know what I have done against them...
—*Mrs Indira Gandhi at a campaign speech in Kulu, Himachal Pradesh*

» The Congress people have become so frightened that I might emerge (as a political force) that they are all uncharacteristically sticking together frantically in trying to pull me down.
—*Mrs Maneka Gandhi in* The Indian Express

» According to his (Jagannath Mishra's) critics Bihar is almost like his *zamindari* and... he has undisputed sway over it.
—*Quark in* The Sunday Review

» Politicians (numbering nearly 200,000) should be dumped as garbage... (Their) only ambition is to turn rich by spinning as much money as possible in the shortest span.
—*Piloo Mody at a press conference in Chandigarh*

» When Antulay was chief minister, only a Shalinitai (Patil) could stand up against him. With (Babasaheb) Bhosale, others can manage.
—*Shalinitai Patil in* Weekend Review

» If she (Mrs Gandhi) cannot manage her own family disputes, how can she manage the country?... People of Bengal have seen her through and through, and they don't believe her cock and bull stories anymore.
—*Promode Dasgupta in* Current

» Credibility to a journal is what chastity is to a woman. Seek it.
—*M.V. Kamath in* Surya India

» Since most Indians have sex on their minds rather than in their groins, it finds more expression in speech than in action.
—*Khushwant Singh in* The Hindustan Times

» What did Rekha have to do in *Umrao Jaan*? She looked lovely with diffusers put in the camera... Rekha didn't deserve her award.
—*Shashi Kapoor on Rekha's National Award winning performance in* Star & Style

» I am in a fantasy world of my own and I do weep. In fact my daily quota for sound sleep is one glass of tears.
—*Deviyani Chaubal in* Eve's Weekly

» Haryana and Himachal Pradesh... are governments of defectors. In Haryana the chief minister himself is a defector.
—*L.K. Advani in* The Pioneer

» I see films, listen to music, play snooker and like being with beautiful girls.
—*Raj Sippy in* Screen



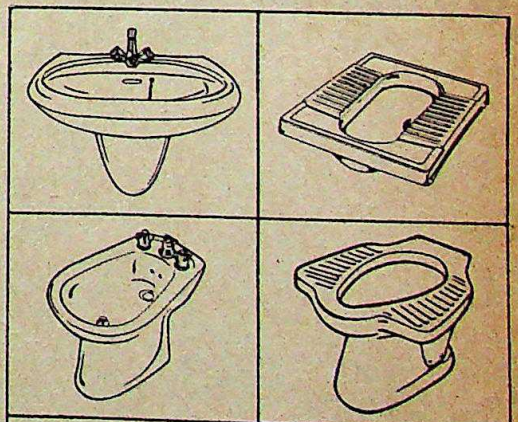
SUDHIR DAR IN THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

"Cut out that election smile—you're home now!"

OBJET D'ART

Cera... a beautiful range of sanitaryware



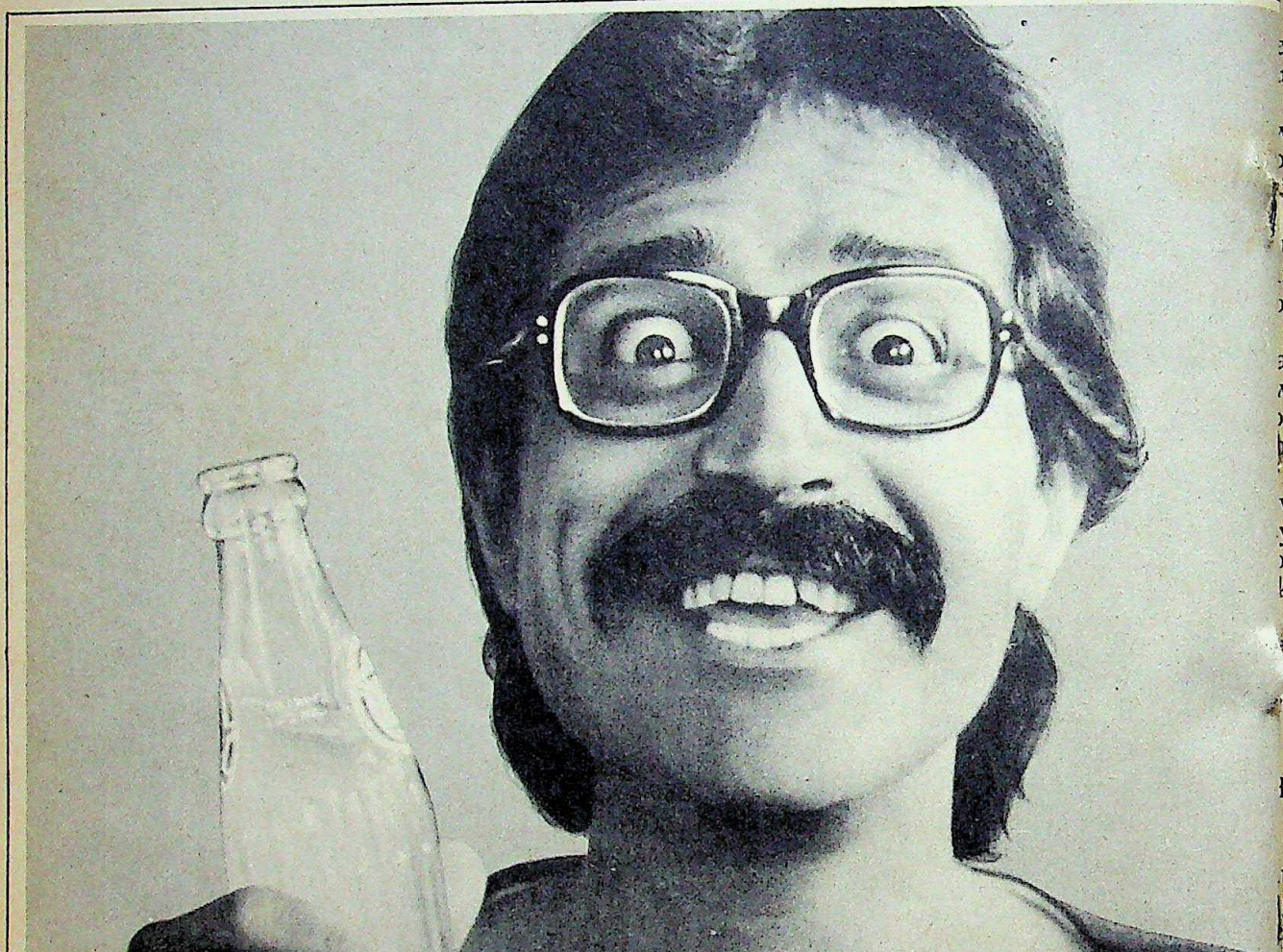


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60 seconds of Tingling excitemer Or how I became a film star.



You will be surprised at how many dumb guys like me are running around loose, without collars and name plates. (If you don't believe me, look around you right *now*. Count them. Notice how skilfully they twiddle their thumbs!)

They come in all shapes and sizes. You will find them spending quiet evenings tearing each other's ears off in wrestling rings.

But most of all you'll find them doing nothing.

But there is hope for us dumb clods. Oh yes! there's hope all right.

Look what's happened to me, after all. Look how big I've made it in the films!

And what was I? One of the worst kinds of Dumbus Blokus (biological name for dumb bloke) you ever tripped over. I was a tot failure at conversation. time I was called upon push a verb against a n I broke out with pneumonia.

But I'm a star now, fellows. And let me tell all about it. Last Sunda was spending a quiet morning at the beach looking for sea-shells.

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I was just another
bless beachcomber in
een Bermudas and striped
shirt.

An hour slipped
acefully by when things
ddenly started happening.

I was peeling a crab
way from my toe when my
pectacles almost cracked
ith shock.

There she lay, in an itsy-
tsy bikini lazily flipping
rough a magazine and
aking up the sun.

My heart thumped out a
antic Morse code all on its
vn, and my knees rattled
loud I'm sure Mom at
me heard them.

I felt myself being pulled
wards her. Sensibly, I told
yself to pack up and go
me, but my legs tried to
ke off without me.

Nervously I stood at her
t and coughed. She didn't
k up. I barked, then
eezed politely.

No response.

I roared like a mouse —
Hello."

She went on reading.

Weak from neglect and
th a heavy heart, I turned
go. I had barely taken a
p, when I felt her leg
ainst mine—and before I
ew it I was sailing
rough the air. I landed in
eap, teeth first. I ached
over, as I pulled my jaw
t from under my thigh
d struggled to my feet.

She had tripped me!

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she
d unconvincingly, a
schievous look in her
s. She flicked sand off
cheeks, and I almost
rst a blood vessel.

"I'd like to help you,"
whispered huskily.
ould you like to Tingle
h me?"

Something rattled in my
throat, and I felt myself turning pink. "Ting... Ting... Tingle?" I croaked aloud.

She nodded her head—and winked.

My jaw dropped with a clack, and a nervous 'R' emerged.

"Right!" she agreed. She opened a little ice-box and gently removed two chilled bottles.

"Heh, heh, heh... Tinglers," I laughed—with relief.

"Ready? Now, take a sip," she said. "Don't swallow. Roll your tongue around." I moved my tongue around slowly. It felt cool and crisp.

"Can you feel it?" she said excitedly. "Can you feel the Tingle?"

My eyes grew wide, as a million bubbles popped against my palate...and a tingling sensation spread slowly all over. Oooh! I burst out:

"I'm Tingling!"

She nodded her head, wide-eyed.

* * * * *

Later that evening she introduced me to her papa, a big film producer.

"Well, son," he boomed. "You're just the chap I need for my new film."

I nearly swallowed my tongue with excitement. Then he glared hard into my eyes, a burnt out cigar clamped between his teeth.

I wasn't a bit afraid. I'd put down three Tinglers a minute ago. I looked at him, cool as an ice pick.

Finally, he said, grinning broadly, "I like your confidence." And that was it. They took a screen test—see the mug shot—and shot the film.

It's showing all over town now.

Why not go see it?

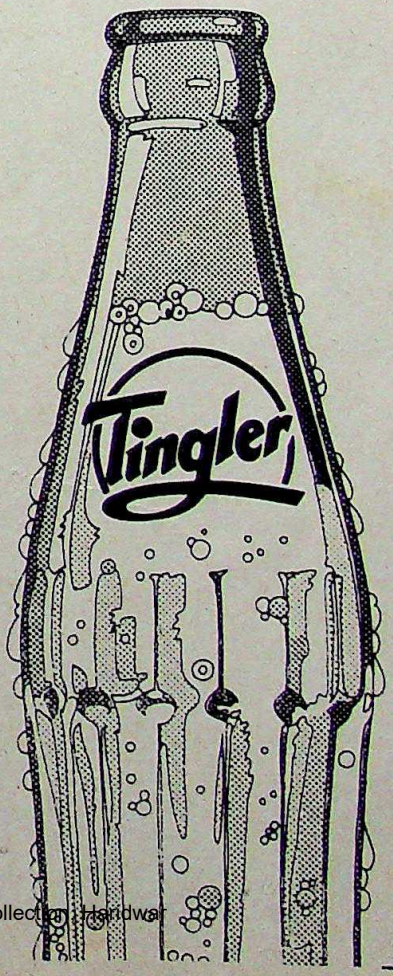
It's only a minute long, so don't leave after you've seen it.

They'll show you another film.

And *that* one's free. Only it's much, much longer.



Lime-Lemon
Artificially flavoured



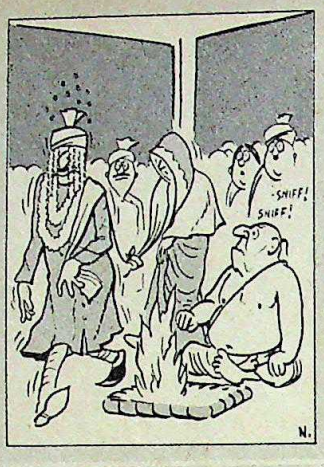
Get the taste that Tingles!

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ONE FOR THE ROAD

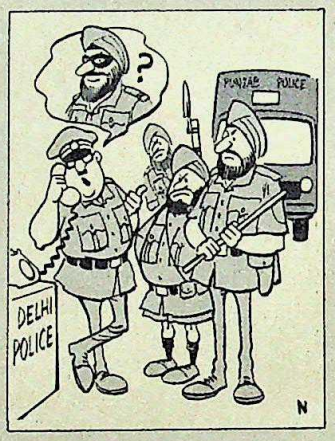


■ Some people always seem to get their priorities in the right order. Consider a young man from a village near Kanpur, in Uttar Pradesh. On a suitably auspicious day last fortnight, this young man got into a bus with a score of his relatives and set off to get married to a girl in village Sahjora, about 25 km from Kanpur. The bus reached the girl's house safely, and her father and mother and assorted aunts and uncles lined up with garlands and sweets to welcome the crowd. But when they rushed around trying to find the bridegroom, he just wasn't there.

While tears welled up in the bride's eyes, her relatives and the highly embarrassed companions of the missing hero turned out in force to hunt for him. They had got as far as a low dive, replete with bottles of liquor, drink-stained tables, and a handful of bleary-eyed, rather incoherent men when they struck oil. One of the incoherent men was the missing Lochnivar, who was possibly the most bleary-eyed of all the revellers.

His bottle was brutally wrenched from his grasp, his body was shaken up thoroughly, the *sehra* tied hastily on his head, and he was pushed through the seven rounds of the sacred fire. This is one young man who is not likely to forget his wedding anniversary date in a hurry. Neither will his wife.

COPS AT PLAY



■ When the police are not catching criminals, they keep in practice by playing cops and robbers among themselves. At least, this is what can be inferred from a little contretemps between the Delhi Police and the Punjab Police in Delhi. The men from Punjab had come to the capital to arrest a Dal Khalsa activist, which they did outside a west Delhi gurudwara. They then decided to call on the Delhi Police, and the small posse met a south Delhi district police officer.

Unfortunately, the police officer was not too sure whether they were actually police and when they confided that they had a Dal Khalsa member with them, the officer excused himself and rushed inside. The Punjab policemen waited for some time, but when he did not reappear with tea and biscuits, they left.

The police officer returned after making a telephone call, discovered that his guests had vanished, and started sending messages over the wireless. The result of all this zeal was that the van in which the Punjab Police were travelling was surrounded by policemen toting sten guns near a hotel. Heated discussions ensued, the sten guns were quickly hidden, and the guests returned home, anger writ large on their faces.

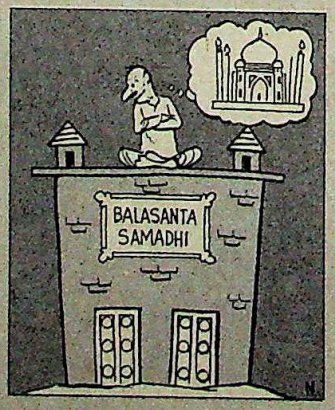
FALSE ALARM



■ In ordinary circumstances, the news that a citizen of Bhopal received through a telegram should have made him jump with joy. The laconic message read: 'Son Born—Savita', Savita being his wife. Curiously, he did not seem very pleased with the news. In fact, he carried his disapproval to great lengths—he told a friend that he was fed up with everything and applied for permission to buy a gun. He would then, he asserted, ride out into the great open spaces for a confrontation with Savita.

Before the angry young man could wreak havoc on Savita, a few concerned friends got together and took another, long look at the telegram. One of them reached the post office to confirm whether the message was authentic. In a short while, the post office realised that there was no way they could get away with this one and sent another telegram, attaching profound regrets for all the commotion. The telegram, it turned out, should have read 'Coming Soon—Savita'. With that, her husband wiped his frown off, had a good laugh, and prepared his bags for a happy reunion with Savita, whom he had not seen for two years.

REST IN PEACE



■ The building of mausoleums is an art that reached its pinnacle with the late lamented Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan, who lie in legendary splendour on the banks of the Yamuna. Even in these heartless times, a bit of that eternal feeling still remains—in Husnabad, Andhra Pradesh, 75-year-old Balasanta Venkatram is building a samadhi for himself and his wife. It is a compact building with two separate rooms and all that remains to be done is to give it a ceiling.

While it might not be in the Taj Mahal class, the samadhi is a satisfying achievement for the professional beggar that Venkatram is. He has spent Rs 8,000 on it from his own pocket, his sons have contributed Rs 250 each, and his son-in-law provided the bricks. Venkatram, in fact, has led quite a life—he married five times, sired 24 children of whom 11 are dead, and has built homes for all.

His children don't beg—they tend sheep and sift garbage for a living. The grand old man estimates the total number of children and grandchildren at about 50, which is something on which he definitely scores over Mumtaz and Shah Jahan.

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SSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Mid-Term Warning

ndira gives her darshan
nly to win an election
—Wall graffiti at Serampore in West engal where Mrs Gandhi addressed an ection rally, and her candidate won.



THERE is more despair than sarcasm in the doggerel. Elections bring out the fighter in Mrs Gandhi as nothing else does, setting her on electrifying campaign trails through the remotest constiencies, chopper-hopping fields, villages d towns. She outpaces her rivals and, sheer speed and charisma, makes rings ound her opponents. She has en at it for 15 years, and has rfected a battle plan which led her once, just once, in 77 in the wake of her unpular Emergency.

Last fortnight, after she ed her way through 149 blic meetings in a 14-day mpaign covering 15,000 km, d the returning officers for 2 assembly constituencies d seven Lok Sabha contuencies began calling out crily the winning names, it was ar that her glitter had begun fade. An electorate of 57 llion made its choice for new islatures in Kerala, West ngal, Haryana and Himachal adesh and returned another assembly and Lok Sabha presentatives; it also rang a ar warning across to 1 darjung Road that the Con-s(I) could no longer take tion victory for granted.

It was in stark contrast the party's heady euphoria of the 1980 tion victory when every citadel of the position was swamped by the flood of s Gandhi's renewed popularity. In just years, history was about to turn full le. Though the Congress(I) tried to put on rave face, it was apparent that there were p lines of worry framing those winning les.

Loose Grip: On the surface the going ted nearly as good as the Congress(I) had ected. The electorate had, after all, given paper-thin edge over its principal adversary, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), to form a government in Himachal Pradesh. The party had usurped power through a virtual *coup d'état* in Haryana. It led a victorious coalition—no matter how opportunistic and disjointed—in Kerala, and it had improved its representation in West Bengal, lunging deep into the middle class fort of Calcutta. But that is where the victory smile froze. For the tally of three to one hid behind its facade the undeniable evidence of the 'hand's' losing grip. For Mrs Gandhi, the 1982 electoral battle, like all historic battles, was lost and won.

The facts stood out like a sore thumb. The Congress(I)'s representation in Kerala, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh had dropped to 88 seats from the 107 it held before the elections. In West Bengal the party more than doubled its representation from 20 to 49 chiefly because of the disappearance of the Janata Party, but trailed so far behind the Marxist-led Left Front (238 seats) as to be virtually meaningless. In Himachal Pradesh the electorate shaved the Congress(I)'s share of votes by a staggering 9 per cent to 43 per cent and in Haryana by 2 per cent to 27 per cent in comparison with the 1980 polls. In West Bengal its share dropped by 4 per cent to about 32 per cent.



RAGHU RAI

Mrs Gandhi: time to worry

Bad Fall: Of the 443 candidates put up by the ruling party, only 135 reached the winning post. It lost four of the seven parliamentary by-elections—losing two of the five Lok Sabha seats it had held earlier—and seven of the 15 assembly by-elections, in a struggle spread over eight states and the Union territory of Mizoram. It was abundantly clear that the ruling party had slipped badly from the peak of its popularity in the 1980 Lok Sabha poll and Mrs Gandhi was whistling in the dark when she asserted last fortnight that the results "in no way amount to a defeat for the Congress(I)." Quipped H.N. Bahuguna of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), who emerged victorious from Garhwal against heavy odds: "Conceding defeat goes against Mrs Gandhi's grain." Added BJP's Satya Narain Jatuja, MP from Madhya Pradesh: "The assembly results have proved that Mrs Gandhi is no longer a bearer cheque for the Congress(I) which can be encashed anywhere in the country. It has bounced this time."

The prime minister might have been rationalising after the event, but there was clear hint of her fabled faculty to see two steps ahead getting blurred with changing events, if not age. A classic example is her decision to stand by Bhajan Lal following the cliff-hanger Haryana poll results, and not to allow Devi Lal, the state Lok Dal leader, to form the government. It no doubt brought in tactical gains for her, but spoilt the chance of her having the last laugh when Devi Lal's ministry would have gone up in smoke, which it was destined to do anyway, judging from the numerous subterranean pulls of discord among his own followers.

Said a senior Congressman now retired from politics: "Mrs Gandhi should have allowed Devi Lal to form the ministry and killed two birds with one stone. When Devi Lal's government collapsed, as it would have in a matter of months, she could have got maximum publicity mileage out of it by pointing out the 'government that *doesn't*

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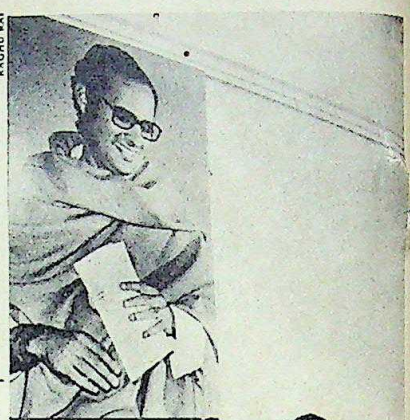
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work', and more important she could have taken a firm line on dissidents and brought home the message to her squabbling party members that dissidence would not be tolerated. Instead she has wooed the rebels for a short-term gain of dubious merit and aggravated the most serious problem confronting her party."

Dejection: This wisdom was born out of hindsight. But even in the immediate wake of the election results the mood in the ill-lit corridors of the Congress(I) office at 24, Akbar Road was sombre, bordering on the dismal. Dejection was writ large even on the faces of Rajiv Gandhi's camp-followers who, ensconced in their Motilal Nehru Marg office, had been calling the shots at every stage in the campaign process. Said a dour Arun Nehru, MP and top party functionary widely credited with a central role in the count-down to the elections: "We could have done better, there's no doubt about it." *(see interview)*.

If the Opposition was guilty of labouring the point that Mrs Gandhi's popularity was declining, there was little doubt about consternation in the Congress(I) ranks. As the results began pouring in, the first reaction of the otherwise loquacious general secretaries of the Congress(I) was to take shelter behind the convenient cliche: "Wait and see." In private conversation, many of the top-drawer party leaders admitted failure but tended to lay it at the doorsteps of either this faction or the other.

Said one: "The worst enemy of the Congress(I) is the Congress(I). We could have won safe margins in both Haryana and Himachal had there been any semblance of cohesion in the party." There were also a handful of Congress(I) leaders who wondered aloud—strictly off the record though—if Mrs Gandhi had really retained her vote-winning pull. Apparently the seeds of doubt a


RAGHU RAI



Nehru: playing it cool

ARUN NEHRU

"Could Have Done Better"

NO INDIAN politician has been so controversial in the recent past as him. Just about everyone in the Congress(I) appears to be blaming him for the party's unimpressive showing in last fortnight's assembly elections. The general belief among the party's rank and file is that it's he who, along with Mrs Gandhi's faceless political aide Makhan Lal Fotedar, was responsible for the bungling in ticket distribution. They are all willing to wound him but are afraid to strike. The burly and baby-faced Arun Kumar Nehru, 38, is a heavyweight in the literal and metaphoric sense too. A third cousin of heir apparent Rajiv Gandhi (his great grandfather Nand Lal Nehru was Moti Lal Nehru's brother), he is thought to enjoy tremendous clout. Then managing director of a Calcutta-based paint company, Nehru was elected from the Rae Bareli Lok Sabha constituency in 1980.

Leaders and workers of his party complain that Nehru is arrogant, haughty and short-tempered, that he bullies people into submission and that in the name of assisting Rajiv, he is creating his own power base by trying to raise his own gang of flunkeys. Chief ministers, Union cabinet ministers and MPs reportedly tremble in his presence and he doesn't allow them to see Rajiv without his knowledge. One party insider moans: "He is alienating at least 500 party workers every day!" Complained a party MP: "Arun Nehru is the most hated man in our party today."

Two things that happened last fortnight suddenly sobered up Nehru. Two weeks before the election, Shrikant Verma, MP and the party's publicity campaign in-charge had to be hospitalised following a scolding he reportedly got from Nehru. An agitated Mrs Gandhi, then campaigning in Calcutta, demanded reasons for Verma's sudden ill health. On return, she reportedly gave Nehru a dressing down for misbehaving with Verma. (Both Nehru and Verma vehemently deny the incident, however).

Even before Nehru could recover from the shock came the assembly election results which clearly embarrassed Mrs Gandhi. She reportedly administered another dose of her famous temper to Nehru. Those who know Nehru well say that he is a much mellowed man these days. They discern a change in him which they feel will do him and his party a lot of good. In an hour-long conversation with INDIA TODAY *Senior Editor* S. VENKAT NARAYAN *in New Delhi last week, Nehru gave the impression that though well-meaning, if raw at political manoeuvres, he is a victim of propaganda by people whom he refused to do favours for. Excerpts:*

Q. *How do you think the elections went for your party?*

A. That's a terribly complicated question. In Kerala we've done well. We haven't done too badly in Himachal Pradesh. In Haryana we should have got five to six seats more. In the by-elections we won three Parliament seats and lost four. We won most assembly seats and lost a couple or so. But we could have done better, no doubt about it.

Q. *People say your party could have done better if only the tickets had been distributed more judiciously.*

A. I don't know about the tickets. That's basically the parliamentary board's job. I don't think there's been an election ever where anyone says the tickets have been given correctly. There is always scope for improvement, everyone gets wiser after the event.

Whether it's a question of our people putting in more effort by working as a more cohesive force or whether it's because of the tickets, it's difficult to say. I'm sure a lot of thought must have gone into the distribution of tickets. You can go wrong, you can go right. I don't think everyone can do everything 100 per cent right.

Q. *Apparently Mrs Gandhi gave Rajiv a free hand in the assembly elections. Rajiv depended on you and M.L. Fotedar to help him select good people. You in turn depended on people like Bhajan Lal, Ram Lal, and Ghani Khan Choudhary who had their own axes to grind. Most tickets went to their favourites who were clearly not very popular with the electorate. They fared badly, much to the embarrassment of everyone concerned. Is this true?*

A. It's a lot of nonsense. Anyone

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er ability have already been sown in the arty, a fact that is pregnant with meaning.

Dissident Power: Internal dissension d bungling over distribution of tickets ere clearly at the root of the party's shrink-g profile in the two northern states of laryana and Himachal Pradesh. In these wo states, the dissidents damaged the cha-ces of the official candidates and of the 54 ho sought Congress(I) tickets and stood as ndependents, no fewer than 11 got elected. or a fortnight before the elections, the ongress(I) offices in the four states were rowned in an unprecedented cacophony of eartburn, mutual acrimony and protests.

THE LATENT irony in the situation came to the fore shortly after the elections when the 'independent' MLAs in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh had to be wooed back into the party to enable it to form governments. In Himachal Pradesh, the three 'independents' tipped the scale in favour of Ram Lal, the chief minister. In Haryana, too, the prodigals returned amid great merriment in the Congress(I) camp. At a time when Mrs Gandhi's party was seething with dissension, the open premium on rebellion set a precedent that is sure to find sympathetic echoes in future.

So brazen-faced was the reaction of the Congress(I) to this phenomenon that no one in its top leadership questioned the wisdom in allowing the rebels re-entry. "It will have no impact on the level of discipline in the party," said Vasantrao Dada Patil, the seniormost of the AICC(I) general secretaries. "After all, these rebels were members of our family only a few weeks back," piped up Labour Minister Bhagwat Jha Azad.

Azad went on to say that the rebels were "not quite" rebels, because they had never defied Mrs Gandhi's authority. However, the rebels, at least 30 of them, were expelled all right from the party before the elections, but the orders were withdrawn against nine of them, and that too selectively from among only the winning 11 candidates. It was a victory of expediency over ethics.

Defections: If dissidents played havoc with the Congress(I)'s poll performance, no less to blame was the party's unabashed reliance on defectors. At the beginning of 1980, the Haryana Assembly had just 12 Congress(I) MLAs, but its strength rose to 51 with the wholesale defection of Bhajan Lal's Janata ministry in February 1980.

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who's remotely connected with how the system works should understand that the opinion of everyone—MPs, party functionaries and even outsiders—is taken. To say that Bhajan Lal or Bansi Lal got their people in is wrong. Basically, everyone's views are put forward. Then a decision is taken. It's quite possible that one chap may have recommended for eight and got four seats, and another may have asked for 10 and got six. But that's how the system works. Cumulatively people have to sit down and take a decision. Those who say that Rajiv had been given full charge are only weaving stories. In every constituency we have 30 candidates. Only one of them gets a ticket, the rest don't. Those who don't are bound to be resentful.

Q. ***Do you have any explanation for not doing that well?***

A. It's got nothing to do with this election or any other. We've got to make the party organisation more active in every place. It should be strengthened at all levels. In our party we've got hundreds of castes, lakhs of people of various age groups. They have to learn to work together.

Q: ***It's two and a half years since Mrs Gandhi's return to power. Some observers feel that the assembly election results indicate that the voters are disappointed by the performance of her government.***

A. I don't think so. In Himachal we've done reasonably well. The BJP too had done a lot of work. With a little bit of hard work, we could have got at least four, five more seats. In Haryana the BJP had 12 seats earlier, now they have six. Four out of these six were won on narrow margins of 100 to 150 votes. These are places where nobody gave us a chance. But we came very near to beating them. In Himachal and Haryana, the difference between victory and defeat was very slender. It's a marginal situation. Somebody can always interpret such a situation as a defeat for the Congress(I). But I don't look at it that way.

"Rajiv has been able to bring people together. He's totally acceptable to everyone. He's the rallying point."

Q. ***The results are also being interpreted as a warning to the prime minister and her son that if they don't change things, victory in the next general election cannot be taken for granted.***

A. That's wishful thinking.

Q. ***What has Rajiv achieved since he entered politics?***

A. He has been able to bring people together. He's totally acceptable to everyone. He's the rallying point and people will rally behind him.

Q. ***The initial enthusiasm people showed for Rajiv when he entered politics appears to be on the wane. In a recent*** INDIA TODAY ***poll, only 30 per cent of the people said he's doing well in politics while 37 per cent said they don't know and the rest didn't think he was doing well.***

A. Everyone is put in a job to perform his responsibilities. He strongly feels that we should have a decent system and it must work. Nobody is Superman. You can do your best, but the others have to perform too. Increasingly, people are being asked to take responsibilities. One man doesn't have 24 arms.

What people write or assume is a separate issue. Whether it is a political organisation or any other, authority has to be decentralised. People have to take decisions. You make mistakes, everyone does. There's an old saying: 'Never trust a man who never makes a mistake!' Basically, people have to buckle down to their responsibilities and perform.

A lot of things are done in this world by communicating with people and getting them to participate. You'll have professional hecklers but you can't go on the defensive because of such people. We've got to do our job, there are no two opinions about it. What we'd like to really see is results coming.

Q. ***Why are people upset by you? Why do you have this Big Bully image?***

A. (*Laughs*) I don't know. Everyone's got his style of functioning. If people want to blow up things, they're most welcome to. But I've no problems. I meet my colleagues. If chaps want to talk, what can you do? Irrespective of what the pressure is, we're not going to do something wrong, that's for sure. The buck has to stop somewhere. One has to adhere to certain principles.

Q. ***People complain that you protect Rajiv like a mother hen, hovering around him all the time, making it impossible for him to talk with his visitors freely.***

A. That's absolute nonsense. It's only a few interested people who want to get something done but can't who propagate such things. The difficulty is that every day there are 600 to 700 people to see him. He can't meet all of them but he does meet as many people as he can. He has his own office, he makes his own programmes.

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Similarly, mass defections increased the Congress(I) strength in Himachal Pradesh to 38. Last fortnight, the Haryana electorate gave the Aya Rams Gaya Rams a decisive thumbs down by flinging 16 of the 21 defectors out of office. Those who remained mostly managed to just scrape through.

In the neighbouring state, 10 of the 15 defectors who had been given tickets were drummed out by the electorate. Ministers suffered a worse fate. No fewer than 10 of the 15 ministers from Bhajan Lal's acrobatic cabinet, who had contested this time, were bundled out in the electoral race. Three ministers of the Ram Lal Government were also sent packing by the electorate.

If there were any lessons to be learnt from these startling—and in some ways pathbreaking—electoral verdicts, they were clearly lost on the Congress(I). The party's high command, blatantly ignoring what was in essence a no-confidence vote in Bhajan Lal's kind of opportunism, manoeuvred to have him reappointed chief minister with one month to prove his majority in the Assembly (*Page 22*). Nobody in the Congress(I) found it odd because it was in conformity with the party's unenviable tradition of embracing defectors.

In 1969, three governments in Haryana—all headed by the Congress—fell in a span of just one month as a result of defections. After the 1967 polls, which were disastrous for Mrs Gandhi, the main plank of her strategy to win over opposition legislators in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh was to cause as many defections as possible from their ranks. In fact, defection and corruption went hand in hand in the recent polls, and there was open talk of MLAs, like garments at a display counter, carrying varied price-tags.

Weaknesses: As if that were not bad enough, ham-fistedness, inexperience, and organisational weakness further diminished the chances of the party. The Jabalpur Lok Sabha seat in Madhya Pradesh was lost in spite of hectic campaigning by state Chief Minister Arjun Singh, Union Railway Minister P.C. Sethi, and former minister Vidya Charan Shukla largely because the constituency's 40,000 Jain voters swung the BJP way after Congress(I) dissidents raided the home of Nirmal Chand Jain, the BJP's man on the spot, and beat him up.

Deputy Minister for Railways Mallikarjun was packed off to Haryana as the AICC(I) observer in total disregard of the fact that the man comes from Andhra Pradesh and cannot speak a word of Hindi. The state Congress(I) chiefs were hardly consulted on nominations: as a result, there were quite a few square pegs in round holes.

From 1967 onwards, it is Mrs Gandhi who has dominated the scene in every election, starting by combing the list of candidates to making whirlwind campaign tours and settling the minutest details. In both 1977 and 1980, it was Sanjay Gandhi who shouldered the task, true to his nonconformist style. He bungled the first time but succeeded the second. This time, his mantle fell on Rajiv Gandhi, but the mantle did not fit.

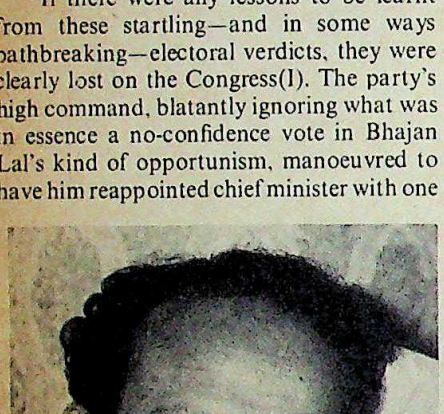
HE WAS ill at ease from the very beginning. Which Lal was to be trusted in Haryana: Bhajan or Bansi? On whom to rely more in his Calcutta campaigns: Subrata Mukherjee or Somen Mitra? How to play the communal card in Kerala, the Punjabi card in Himachal and the anti-Jat card in Haryana? These are some of the occult intricacies of Indian politics which still elude Rajiv. As a result, he chose the easiest option of mimicking his mother, which means rising above the internecine contradictions of the Congress(I) and addressing the electorate from a pedestal raised above all controversies.

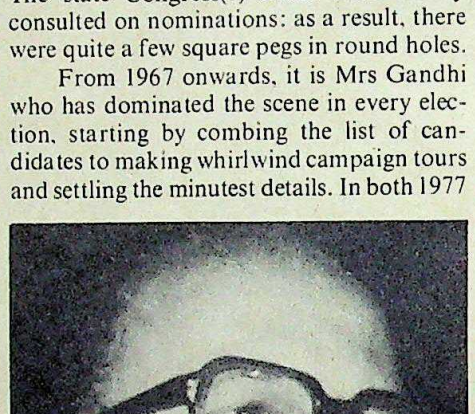
It was an unfortunate decision for who has neither the stature nor the larity of his mother to cut his way through the tangled web of contradictions within party. His pious admonitions to the ssidents in Haryana and West Bengal to show even the modicum of a result speeches at whistle-stop rallies were by poor attendance, apart from the fact they were rendered in bad Hindi and with a string of Indira-esque cliches.

Unwelcome Shadow: A senior political columnist in New Delhi remarked that most delightful corollary to the recent sembly elections is the exposure of Gandhi as the most simple-minded country's existing politicians". Guildernstern going to't with Rosencr went down Rajiv's trusted aides—and M.L. Fotedar (Mrs Gandhi's po secretary)—the 'terrible twins'. These had cast a shadow over the entire tioneering process, and had mucked it their hauteur, amateurism and almost reliance on the techno-bureaucrats in ference to the grassroots politicians.

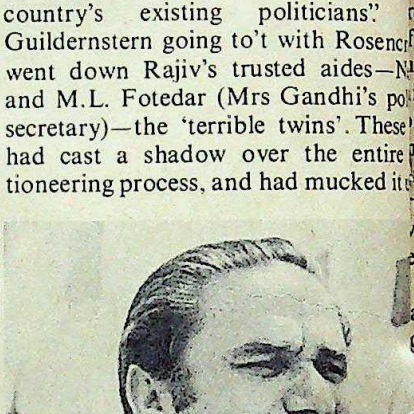
The Economist summed up the phenomenon aptly when it quoted, May 28 issue, an unnamed anti-Cong politician as saying: "The poor (Rajiv) doesn't know how to buy, pre or frighten people. He is too pleasant a very intelligent. He is like one of our Bengali snacks—snow-white and very but soft at the centre. Under press disintegrates. He had better learn qui they will have him for tiffin." The weekly observes that Rajiv, thou about to be bludgeoned out of poli 'beginning to seem a liability", a cont which may not find many doubters the Congress(I) ranks.

Liability or not, Mrs Gandhi is





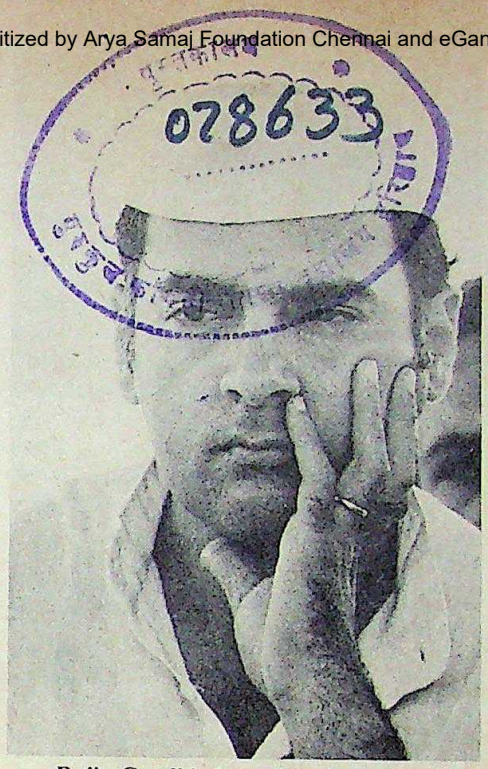
CHHAYA KENDRA



(From left) V.P. Singh, Arjun Singh and M.L. Fotedar: election casualties?

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Rajiv Gandhi: lessons to be learnt

cely to sideline Rajiv since it would reflect dly on her own judgement. But the ection post-mortem is, according to siders, certain to result in some ruthless uning in the upper branches of the party ee. According to them, the heads that will ll belong to UP's Vishwanath Pratap ngh, Madhya Pradesh's Arjun Singh and Irs Gandhi's political Man Friday, M.L. otedar. Mrs Gandhi is reportedly already asting around for replacements. Another ection casualty is Arun Nehru whose political wings are likely to be clipped.

Waiting Dissidents: Now that the ongress(I) has received a shaking at the nds of the electorate, and the halo around Irs Gandhi is somewhat dimmed, dissidents re sure to have a field day. At any rate, a lot f them are waiting in the wings—be it the upporters of former Maharashtra chief inister A.R. Antulay, the forked-tongued llowers of Madhya Pradesh strongman ukla or the sulking admirers of the former ndhra Pradesh chief minister T. Anjiah. A isis over the Maneka Gandhi episode was verted with ease some time back: it may not so easy tomorrow.

This scenario is in many ways Mrs andhi's own creation. The naked display of discipline in evidence at the recent elec- ns would not have been at such an ugly if she had not attempted to systemati- lly disturb the functional order of the rty's hierarchy, to downgrade each and ery state and district leader, and to gather l power into her own hands. The em- culation of the 'natural' leaders makes a kening list: Kamlapati Tripathi in Uttar adesh, Shukla in Madhya Pradesh, Sid- artha Shankar Ray in West Bengal, anna Reddy in Andhra Pradesh, Bansi l in Haryana.

Like weeds replacing plants, their places ve been taken up by Lilliputians of the odern variety—the stuffed men of the ilk of shwanath Pratap Singh, the Uttar Pradesh ief minister, Arjun Singh, the Madhya adesh chief minister, Ananda Gopal ukherjee, the West Bengal Congress(I) f. B. Venkataram, the Andhra Pradesh ief minister, and Shiv Charan Mathur, the jasthan chief minister.

These men are hardly a match for the te's streetwise Opposition leaders like anta Kumar in Himachal Pradesh, rpoori Thakur in Bihar, Devi Lal in ryana, Sunder Lal Patwa in Madhya adesh, Parkash Singh Badal in Punjab, airon Singh Shekhawat in Rajasthan, arad Pawar in Maharashtra, Vijay mar Malhotra in Delhi and Babubhai tel in Gujarat. The difference in quality ability is bound to show up in sub- uent elections. As a political pundit puts "Its true that Mrs Gandhi has a bedrock following of 25 to 30 per cent in nearly every constituency in the country, but the local leadership and the individual candidate must swing the extra 15 per cent or so of votes to clinch a victory".

In the past, Nehru was able to run the states with the help of middle level leaders like Y.B. Chavan, Pratap Singh Kairon, Biju Patnaik, Kamlapati Tripathi, Bhagawat Dayal Sharma, Kamaraj, M. Channa Reddy and Mohan Lal Sukhadia. Now, their places have been taken by, at the most, half-a-dozen people in the prime minister's household who have doubtful political credentials.

Moreover, last fortnight's election results have conclusively proved that the party's base has been eroded in many states and it is facing challenges from national and regional parties in a large chunk of the country. Currently, all the seven eastern states are outside the reach of the Congress(I). In Haryana, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh the party faces a growing threat from the Lok Dal-BJP alliance while the BJP alone is capable of undermining the ruling party's grip on Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi. Meanwhile, the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, the Akalis in Punjab, the left Front in Bengal and Kerala are regional parties capable of queering the electoral pitch for the Congress(I) in future.

On paper, that leaves only Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka and Gujarat still firmly in Congress(I) control. Says Raj Narain, the irrepressible DSP leader: "Mrs Gandhi has polled one-fourth of the votes in all the four states together. By the time the next election takes place, she will be heading a regional party confined to south of the Vindhyas".

Though Narain was being his usual overoptimistic self, the losses to the Congress(I) are manifold and grevious. Long hailed as a champion of the minorities, last fortnight's elections clearly revealed that Mrs Gandhi has now lost some of that pull. In Garhwal, Mrs Gandhi's strategy to put up a Thakur boomeranged when C.M. Negi was roundly defeated by Bahuguna, who bagged 60 per cent of the Thakur vote. In Jabalpur, Mrs Gandhi failed to gain the support of the 80,000 Muslim voters—over 70 per cent of them abstained from voting, thus ensuring the victory of the BJP candidate. The symptoms are endless and the warnings writ large all over the country. For the first time since she came to power, Mrs Gandhi's secular credentials were being questioned.

Opposition Status: However, what is the Congress(I)'s loss is not necessarily the Opposition's gain. As the recent election show, no opposition party has basked in glory in more than one state. In Himachal Pradesh, the BJP has taken the cake, while in Haryana it is the Lok Dal which has carried the day. It is true that the Marxists have blazed a trail of glory in West Bengal and have at the same time not quite lost their touch in Kerala. But their candidates have come croppers in the 'mainstream' states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

Similarly, the BJP, yet another party itching to take a great leap outward of its homeland in Hindi-speaking north India, found it was running out of gas as its 123 candidates in Kerala and West Bengal, barring only two, lost their security deposits.

The mosaic of the election tally revealed a curious, if not downright ominous, scenario with the Lok Dal winning many seats in Haryana but no seat in neighbouring Himachal, the Marxists winning no seat in northern India, and the BJP winning a good number of upcountry seats but none in eastern and southern India.

Each election in India is a promise of hope and a warning of despair. Each shows greater vitality of the electorate, sharper dynamism of the vote. Each also shows how the electoral mechanism is ready to humble the democratic process, and how political principles and electoral morals fall off the system like barren leaves. With the threat of an eventual atomisation of the country's polity hanging like a cloud, each election in India raises the agonising question: will the democratic process be able to contain the increasingly evident differentiation of classes, castes, and interests? Or will it be overpowered by forces which are not willing to part with power? The election of May 19 provides no answer. It only sharpens the question.

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HARYANA

Governor's Disgrace

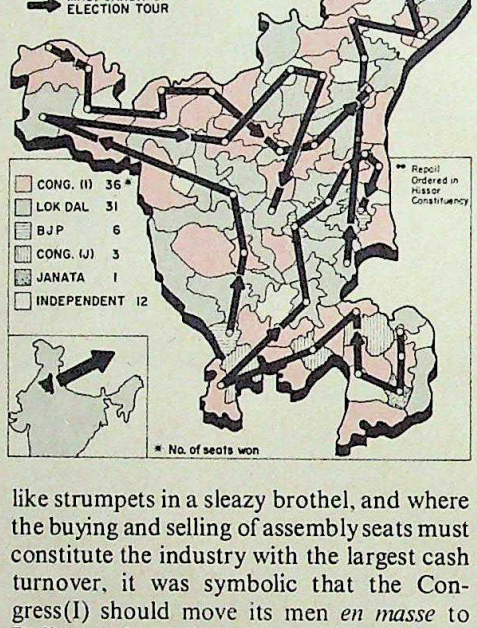


EIGHTEEN hours after Haryana Governor Ganapatrao Devji Tapase committed the most undemocratic *faux pas* in India's political history, he was cowering on a sofa in the Chandigarh Raj Bhavan's large reception hall. "This is Haryana!" yelled apoplectic Lok Dal MLAs, eyes bloodshot, neck veins bulging, pressing around the diminutive Tapase in a knee-touching, eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation. "The bullets are going to fly," they chorused, "blood's going to flow!"

Tapase is 73 years old, suffers from herpes, wears a perpetually pained expression, and seems incapable of engaging in coherent conversation. As the verbal assault intensified, led by Lok Dal leader and chief minister-aspirant Devi Lal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Dr Mangal Sein, and lawyers Parkash Singh Daulta and Maharaj Singh, Tapase could only mumble in protest. At one point, as his hand involuntarily rose to touch his chin, it was brushed brusquely aside by Devi Lal. Growled the hefty Jat leader as he tweaked the governor's chin: "You slave of Indira Gandhi, do you think you can get away with what you've done?"

It was incredible political drama, a savage satire on electoral politics, and Tapase had only himself to blame for the mess. That Monday's fracas in the august gubernatorial residence only peaked a sordid week-end. The sequence began the previous Friday, May 21, when the future of power in the 90-seat Haryana Assembly hung precariously in the balance with the Congress(I) winning 35 seats and the Lok Dal 31. Partner in an uneasy poll alliance with the Lok Dal, the BJP won six seats.

Large Turnover: The head-hunt for securing a majority began then, with the Lok Dal-BJP combine claiming the additional support of three Congress (Jagjivan Ram) supporters, one Janata MLA, and half-a-dozen independents. In a state where party programmes and performance have long ago lost meaning, where legislators solicit buyers like strumpets in a sleazy brothel, and where the buying and selling of assembly seats must constitute the industry with the largest cash turnover, it was symbolic that the Congress(I) should move its men *en masse* to Delhi to "decide" the leadership issue.



So it was that on Saturday, May 22, while Devi Lal rushed to and from the Raj Bhavan, first to demand the dismissal of the Congress(I) ministry and then to press his own claim for the chief ministership, the squat and swarthy incumbent of that Bhajan Lal, was himself trying to con the High Command—which meant I Gandhi and her son Rajiv—that he wa only person who could deliver the goo

The bargaining at 1 Safdarjung R and at Haryana Bhavan in Delhi wen well into the afternoon. After all, Bhajan had established an utterly amoral and scrupulous track record during his ministership, right from the momen walked over with 40 Janata MLAs int Congress(I) camp soon after the 19 neral elections.

Worse, it was clear that Hary voters hadn't forgiven the largest-eve fection in that citadel of defection. Te Bhajan Lal's 14 ministers had been thr in the elections on May 19, and of th hard core followers he secured tickets fo were wiped off the electoral slate.

Foul Choice: In the end, faced wit fact that it had failed to establish a ma by fair means, the Congress(I) was f to plump for the foul choice of letting Bh Lal loose in the market-place of legis flesh, and he was "unanimously" el leader of the Congress(I) Legislature P

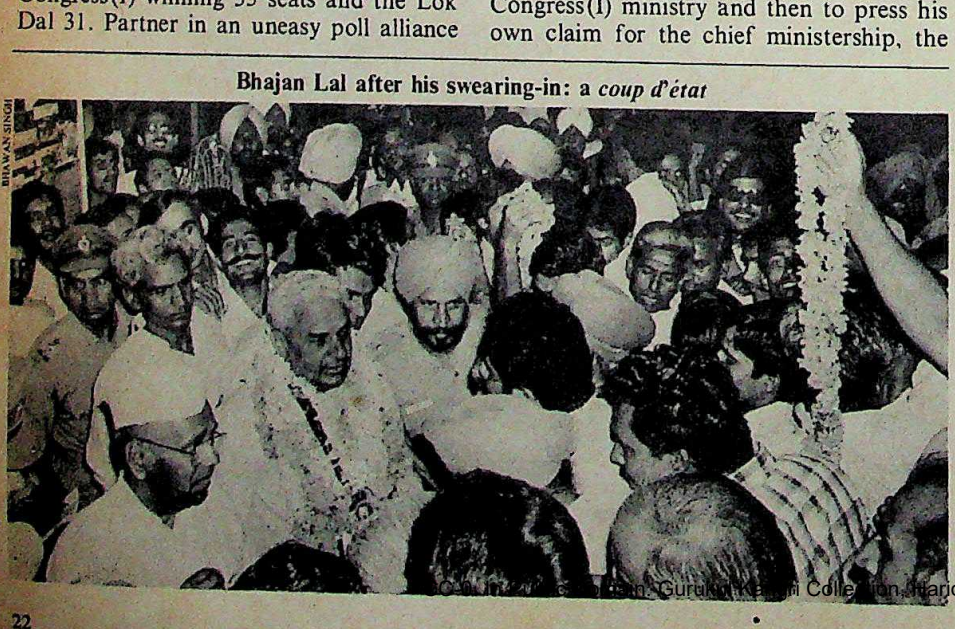
At just about that time, Gov Tapase was telling Devi Lal in Chand to physically parade his supporters in the Bhavan on Monday, May 24, so th could verify the coalition's claims of jority. In what was an orchestrated Devi Lal was chosen to spearhead Opposition's bid for power.

Within hours of receiving the go-a in the sweepstakes from Tapase, Devi son Om Prakash, aided by Akali Dal and former Punjab chief minister Pra Singh Badal, had succeeded in shephe most of the coalition's MLAs into the Hotel Shivalik at Parwanoo in Him Pradesh, right across the border from Designating himself the "independen chief", Lachhman Singh strutted arou holiday resort, supervising the hide creature comforts.

It was all very hush-hush, a sce Mario Puzo could base his next novel a big group of colourful Nihang Sikhs contingent of other Badal-assigned g armed to the teeth with swords and kept intruders away and the precious lators inside the hotel, Devi Lal fran tried to rope in more men on his side.

Trump Card: Meanwhile, Bhajan was playing his trump card. That Sunday, May 23, the wily political returned from Delhi in the Haryana Go ment's twin-engined Beechcraft at 3 and hurried to Raj Bhavan. An hour quarter later, Bhajan Lal emerged smugly told newsmen that he would something for them in a while. A little

Bhajan Lal after his swearing-in: a *coup d'état*



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ersistent reporters forced Tapase to spill the eans: that he would swear Bhajan Lal in by 30 p.m. "Haven't you received the notifi- ation?" he asked.

Events unfolded with indecent haste ereafter. Tapase went back to his office for confrontation with five Lok Dal leaders, who had been kept waiting while the gover- or worked things out with Bhajan Lal and Haryana Chief Secretary Ishwar Chander. hen, Tapase came out to swear in a Bhajan al clad in natty *sherwani* and *churidars*, to ucous cries from close to a thousand upporters. Moments before the ceremony, hajan Lal performed the farcical duty of esigning along with his cabinet from the revious government. The political *coup etat* had an air of having been arranged ell in advance.

FROM the very beginning, the political dice had been loaded in Bhajan Lal's favour. Haryana's infamous chief inister belongs to the Bishnoi community Rajasthan, a deeply religious sect that natically protects wildlife in the Udaipur gion. The same zeal seems to have been ed by Bhajan Lal in acquiring that ul- mate two-legged animal, the Haryana islator.

His forte is the psychological soft-sell. Bhajan Lal is a very good psychologist. s admirers and enemies both admit that he pick out a man's weak spots and strike althily at them. "He's so good to you, so licitous, so polite and anxious to woo you at you don't even realise you've been urchased," says a man who is sure to come a minister in Bhajan Lal's new binet.

Factions: Currently, the Congress(I) in aryana is divided into so many camps, it uld easily be called a coalition. Apart from hajan Lal's group, there is former state rty president Harpal Singh's group; for- er minister of state Dalbir Singh's group; nion Agriculture Minister Rao Birendra gh's group; Bansi Lal's formidable up; Chaudhury Chand Ram's Harijan up; and Chiranji Lal Sharma's Brahmin up. There is also the Jat leader, Shamsher gh Surjewala, a loyal Congressman who s elected in spite of attempted sabotage by ajan Lal and later tried to stake his claim the chief ministership.

It was ironical, and indicative of the peratives of defection politics, that rjewala was ultimately forced to propose ajan Lal's name in Delhi for leadership of legislature party. In contrast with the serable performance of Bhajan Lal's men, nsi Lal got seven of his eight candidates cted—including his son Surinder Singh, o won from Tosham with the largest rgin, 25,628 votes.

The key to power lay with the independents, who won 12 seats. At least eight of these were Congress(I) rebels, denied party tickets at the last moment, who had nevertheless defeated the official candidates. It was humiliating for the Congress(I), but the party had to eat crow, dangle ministerships as bait, and buy back the very people it had kicked aside a few weeks earlier. Bhajan Lal's list, submitted to Tapase on May 23, had 41 names—and these included six independents: Rahim Khan from Nuh, Lachhman Dass Arora from Sirsa, Chada Singh from Nilokheri, Sharda Rani from Ballabhgarh, Rajender Singh from Kaliana, and Lachhman Singh from Kalka.

Example: Lachhman Singh symbolises the machinations of defection politics. After roundly abusing Bhajan Lal in public, and participating in every high-profile Lok Dal gambit, Lachhman Singh suddenly failed to sign the memorandum, signed by Devi Lal and his 44 men to prove the coalition's strength on May 24. When the coalition's MLAs were driven in a tourist bus directly from the Parwanoo 'camp' to the Raj Bhavan that afternoon for the physical parade the governor had demanded and then pre-empted, Lachhman Singh was missing.

Devi Lal was told by some supporters that the shifty Sikh had been arrested early that morning at Kalka in connection with a shooting incident during the campaign in Pinjore town. By evening that day, Lachhman Singh had proclaimed support for Bhajan Lal. This was the very man who, 48 hours earlier, had loudly boasted: "Bhajan Lal rang me up from Delhi and asked me how much money I wanted. I asked him: how much could I buy *him* for?"

Another great turnabout was executed by Col Rao Ram Singh's Congress(J) group. Speaker of the last Assembly, he had quit the Congress(I) with his supporters after a feud with Rao Birendra Singh. His victories in the Ahir belt—and the defeat of Birendra Singh's people such as Rao Bansi Singh, Rao Dalip Singh and Sumitra Devi—had cracked Birendra Singh's hold.

Shifting Scenes: Ram Singh, who had once in "self defence" fired into a crowd mobbing him, joined Devi Lal in berating Tapase on May 24. But as he also met Rajiv Gandhi "to give him details of Rao Birendra's defectors", the shift was already in the making. After the Devi Lal party bussed down to Delhi to meet President Sanjiva Reddy, Haryana police rudely awakened Ram Singh in Haryana Bhavan and confronted him with the shooting incident. Later, both Bhajan Lal and Devi Lal barged in to drag him away and retreated only when he pulled out his revolver. Hours later, Ram Singh said he was "reviewing" his support for the Lok Dal-BJP alliance, and added that he was going to meet Mrs Gandhi.

Devi Lal also needed to hang on to his independents, among them Hukam Singh from Salhawas and Sampat Singh from Bhattu Kalan, both former Lok Dal members who had been denied tickets but had won anyway. The Lok Dal also gathered independents Ram Singh from Radaur and Roshan Lal Tiwari from Kaithal, just before the party legislators' meeting on May 22. But the most precious trophies were Phool Chand of Mullana and Lal Singh of Naraingarh.

There was talk of guarding the legislators, and Badal offered the shelter of a gurudwara and Nihangs. Lal Singh's and Phool Chand's wives tried to 'rescue' their husbands from Devi Lal's clutches—the implication that they had been kidnapped was

Tapase with Devi Lal and Mangal Sein: eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation



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repeated by Tapase himself when he tried to pooh-pooh Devi Lal's majority claim. Lal Singh nearly slipped away with his wife, but Devi Lal shepherded him back on to the bus outside the governor's residence.

It was a dreary ending to the confrontation with Tapase, who had kept the group waiting for nearly two hours while he consulted Joint Legal Remembrancer R.K. Gupta about the constitutional aspects of the Devi Lal camp's foremost demands—that Tapase ought to summon the Assembly immediately and force Bhajan Lal to prove his majority.

Sorry Chapter: Tapase predictably rejected this request later, and it was clear that Bhajan Lal had more than a month to woo, buy and coerce support for his minority government. It was an extraordinary ending to a sorry chapter, a mess worsened by the governor's blunder of hastily bestowing chief ministership on Bhajan Lal. If Tapase had waited until after Devi Lal's men's identification parade on May 24, to announce that he favoured the largest party over the largest coalition, he would have been on firm ground for Article 163(2) of the Constitution clearly states that the governor's decision about ministry formation "shall be final and the validity of his decision is not open to question in a court of law".

Altough the Congress(I) backed down a little and announced on May 26 that the Assembly session would be summoned much before Tapase's deadline, it was clear that Bhajan Lal had already succeeded in luring back enough independent MLAs to form a majority government. The day after he was sworn in, when asked how many MLAs his party could buy, he cockily told INDIA TODAY: "Do you think those who sell themselves are going to tell you?"

Sure enough, when Bhajan Lal's 18-member Cabinet was sworn in on May 27, the independents got four cabinet posts, and three ministerships of state. Lachhman Singh, who had shown the crooked path of defection to his fellow independents, was followed by Sharda Rani, Phool Chand, Rajinder Singh, Lal Singh, Chanda Singh and Rahim Khan. And, although Ram Singh had denied that Bhajan Lal was trying to force him to join by holding out the threat of arrest, the ex-speaker meekly went over. Even more painful for Devi Lal was the defection of a full-fledged Lok Dal MLA, Brij Mohan Singla. Hypocritically, the Congress(I) decided to re-admit all the defecting independents into the party, revoking the 6-year suspension slapped on them when they stood as independents.



BHAWAN SINGH

Lok Dal MLAs entertain independent Lal Singh (centre) while rifle-toting guard keeps watch

Clear Signals: What will be interesting is how Bhajan Lal accommodates minister-aspirants from the other Congress(I) factions. Independent Lal Singh had signalled his intention clearly during the opposition MLAs' noisy encounter with the governor when he told reporters: "Even if Bhajan Lal forms a ministry with the majority, I shall then ask my voters which side I should support, and if they say Bhajan Lal, then I will join him. Write this also: that Devi Lal has got me here only because he had promised me a ministership." Significantly, Lal Singh who was a deputy minister in the outgoing cabinet, has been promoted to minister of state.

In the end, it was a moral blunder on Tapase's part, and that was glossed over by legal experts tried to justify his action. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi called on President Reddy on May 25 to list several 'precedents' for reposing faith in the largest single party in the event of a legislative stalemate.

But the Congress(I) failed to respond to the point that if Tapase's question was the yardstick was used, Kerala Governor V. Venkatachellum would have had to ask CPM leader E.K. Nayanar to form a government, since his was the largest single party in the newly-elected Assembly. Yet, Venkatachellum had bestowed power on the Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front—a very sort of loose coalition that Tapase doubted would hold together in Haryana.

Election Fraud: It was clear then that in Haryana—and in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh—the Congress(I) had used the levers of power in Delhi to create minority ministries down the electoral throat. Once Bhajan Lal occupied the chief ministerial chair, he could easily hold out for cabinet posts before prospective defections. Simply put, the proceeds of the sale of tickets to prospective candidates were now presently being used to buy defectors—leaving a handsome profit for future transactions.

Tapase is due to retire from his post in October this year. An old Haryana Congress(O) follower of Morarji Desai who served in Desai's Bombay cabinet. On that stormy Monday in Chandigarh's Raj Bhavan, he was reminded bluntly by the Lok Dal leader that he had been appointed by the Janata government, that he had swallowed the insult of being transferred from Himachal Pradesh to Haryana in February 1980, and that he was a Harijan governor who should consider that there were 11 Harijans among the Opposition MLAs.

Although no one, not even President Reddy, could undo the damage Tapase had wrought, there was no doubt that the governor had set a new and disturbing precedent in a state where legislators can be bought over the counter, where a man like Gaya Lal switched sides four times on a single day in 1967, and Hiranand Arya (now a Lok Dal MLA) six times within 36 hours a year later. Worse still, despite the voters' rejection of defectors, despite the defeats of most of Bhajan Lal's hand-picked men, Indira Gandhi and her son have been forced to fall back upon that archetypal defector.

A fraud has been perpetrated on Haryana's voters; they have got a government they don't deserve, a government of men with no morals or ideology, willing to sell their elected posts to the highest bidder in this auction of ill-bred horse-flesh.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG in Chandigarh

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HIMACHAL PRADESH

The Photo Finish



IT WAS a photo finish in the hills of Himachal Pradesh. As the Election Commission's enumerators put the final tally on the scoreboard, both the Congress(I) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could not secure a clear mandate from the 22-lakh-strong electorate. But the voters had made one thing quite clear: they rejected defection politics by humbling 10 of the 15 defectors to the Congress(I) from the while Janata Party and, in the process, signed their thumbs down on the ruling party's performance.

The Congress(I)'s share of votes fell from 50.18 per cent in the January 1980 parliamentary poll to 42.58 per cent and it could win only 31 of the 67 seats it contested. This loss was the BJP's gain: it improved its strength from 24 seats in the dissolved house of 29 with 35.16 per cent of the vote, the highest it has ever polled in a state. The Janata Party was almost eclipsed, winning only two of the 50 seats it contested. Only six of the 204 independent candidates made it. But these 'dirty half-a-dozen', as a Congress(I) leader called them, held the balance of survival of the Government.

Divided Voters: The ambiguous electoral verdict arose out of the separate caste and regional bases of both the BJP and the Congress(I). Since both parties were led by former chief ministers—Ram Lal of the Congress(I) and Shanta Kumar of the BJP—with unblemished images, and belonging to two different regions and castes, the voters were evenly divided. Exploiting the novelty of new Himachal, comprising Kulu, Kangra, Hamirpur and Una districts, the BJP promised to convert this into an island of prosperity. Shanta Kumar, the BJP's choice for the chief ministership, belonged to the Kangra district, and his party bagged 19 of the seats in these four districts.

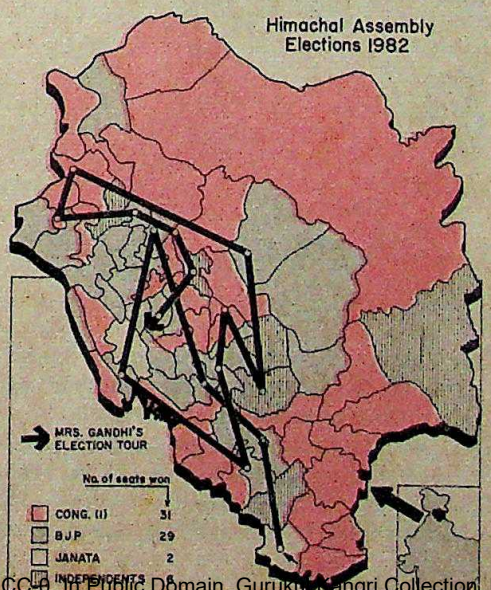
In fact, when the first results started coming in, BJP took 12 of 16 seats. But the Congress(I) reversed the trend when the vote-boxes of old Himachal were opened. The ruling party's share was 23 of the 38 seats in the seven districts of Simla, Solan, Sirmaur, Bilaspur, Mandi, Sirpur and Una and the BJP could get only nine seats. Said Vijay Kumar Malhotra, BJP election-in-charge in the state: "Ram Lal could defeat us in his fortress through massive misuse of official machinery and by spending crores of rupees. But we have been able to provide a two-party system in the state."

Sabotage: The Congress(I)'s failure to secure an absolute majority stemmed from group rivalries, wrong selection of candidates and intra-party sabotage. Admitted Sarla Sharma, Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee(I) president: "*Ghar ko aag lag gai ghar ke chirag se* (Our house caught fire from its own lamp)." Sharma herself was defeated by an unknown BJP candidate.

The major cause for the set-back seems to be the hostility between Sarla Sharma and Ram Lal. Party chief Sarla Sharma might be, but her recommendations were ignored by the Congress(I) high command. She was even denied a ticket for her daughter, while Ram Lal managed one for his son-in-law Khush Parmar, from Paunta-Doon, a relatively safe constituency. As a result of the infighting the ruling party lost at least seven seats while four of 23 Congress(I) rebels defeated official candidates. The most spectacular rebel victory was that of Major Vijai Singh Mankhotia, a friend of Rajiv Gandhi's who won from Shahpur constituency.

Ram Lal: clinging to power





Group Rivalries: The BJP, which is considered to be a disciplined and well-knit party, was also plagued with internal dissensions. The Janata Party—whose primary objective was to defeat the BJP rather than to win its own seats—contributed enormously to BJP losses. Also, Shanta Kumar was accused of concentrating more on new Himachal and on candidates belonging to his own caste.

After the electoral race, another began: to grab the independents. Shanta Kumar was the first to stake his claim for the chief minister's post when he submitted a list of 35 MLAs including Shyama Sharma and Ranjit Singh of the Janata Party and four independents—T.S. Negi, Vijai Singh, Gulab Singh and Moti Ram—to Governor A.N. Banerjee. He promised to present them physically later in the evening. But Shanta Kumar lost out when both Janata MLAs and two independents changed their minds.

Both MLAs had personal scores to settle with the Himachal Pradesh BJP chief. Shyama Sharma, a former Socialist, had been dropped from the cabinet by Shanta Kumar, and Ranjit Singh was not given any important role in the state's politics. Even Negi, speaker of the dissolved assembly, who won with BJP support, later changed his mind, presumably because his plea for choosing an independent as chief minister was rejected by the BJP leadership. Said Shanta Kumar: "I failed to mobilise majority support because we didn't use unethical means to woo MLAs. This kind of majority would not be long-lasting."

While the BJP leaders were battling heavy odds, the ruling party despatched over half-a-dozen leaders from New Delhi to help Ram Lal woo independents. The team included Minister of State for Supply and Rehabilitation Buta Singh, Vishwajeet Singh, the newly-elected Rajya Sabha member from Maharashtra and AICC(I) General Secretary Chandulal Chandrakar. Within 24 hours, they had done their job.

Ram Lal has the support of 34 MLAs and two others have promised him their backing. However, he could not obtain Vijai Singh's support; said Singh: "I am not for sale. How have I become useful for the party when I was denied a ticket earlier?" The party is confident, though; said a Congress(I) leader: "We will be able to ensure stability by winning over all the independents and one or two from the BJP." It is clear that the state, which has seen only four governments since its inception, was in for Aya Ram Gaya Ram politics, with instability round the corner.

—PRABHU CHAWLA with GOBIND THUKRAL

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KERALA

A Winning Combination



OTTAMTHULLAL, along with *kathakali*, made Kerala famous not only in the country but across the world. The politicians could not remain immune before these accomplished dancers whose nimble footwork taught them to move with grace from one front to the other, unmindful of the ideological conflicts and contradictions. Kunjan Nambiar, the *ottamthullal* maestro, could improve on the techniques of this dance form if he followed the antics of the leaders of the regional, sub-regional, religious and communal parties that have proliferated in the state, enabling the Congress(I) to lead the 12-party United Democratic Front (UDF) to victory in the eighth elections to the Kerala Assembly.

The battle of the ballot in fact was between the Congress (I), heading the UDF, and the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), leading the rival eight-party Left Democratic Front (LDF), which they fought mainly through surrogates for the major part of the 140 seats. With the double win scored by K. Karunakaran, the Congress(I) leader, the UDF got 77 seats and the LDF 63. The Congress(I) tally, however, was only 20, which will go down to 19 once Karunakaran gives up his second seat, against the CPI-M score of 26.

Real Victors: It is therefore not accurate to term the results as a Congress(I) victory. The real victors are the caste, communal and religious groups who between them cornered 35 out of the 77 UDF seats whereas in the LDF, only four seats are held by this section. The ministry Karunakaran formed will remain a prisoner of these pressure groups.

As soon as the counting of votes was over on May 20, Karunakaran booked a midnight call to Mrs Gandhi to tell her, "Hello Madam, we've won," and was in turn duly congratulated by the prime minister for his splendid performance. At what cost this victory? The UDF had to unabashedly accept the support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which the Congress(I) considers its number one enemy at the Centre.

Whenever the national political wind crosses the Western Ghats and blows over the narrow strip called Kerala, reclaimed from the Arabian Sea by Lord Parasurama as legend has it, the dividing lines get b and anything goes. Even at the hei Congress power, the Kerala unit Muslim League, in its eyes, was a sectarian, progressive secular party, j cause it needed the community's

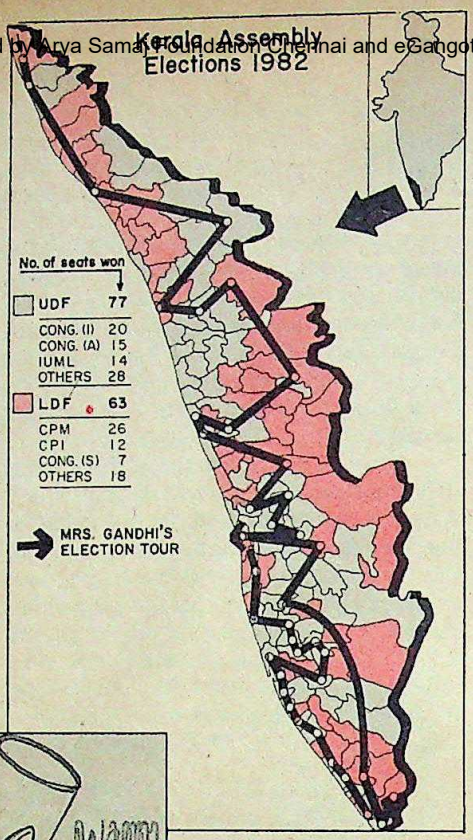
It is therefore not surprising th support of the BJP was also welcome Congress(I) to gain a foothold in the administration. The BJP extended its s openly to the National Democratic (NDP) and the Socialist Republican (SRP), representing the Nair and communities respectively, who toget counted for six of the UDF seats, a directly to several candidates, its ma sideration being to help increase the s Hindu representation in the Assemb

Acceptance: The BJP, which fiel candidates, almost twice the share Congress(I) and 18 more than the polled an aggregate of 2,22,314 vot managed to retain the security depo Kasaragod and Manjeshwar constitu in the extreme north on the Kar border, not a mean achievement consi that in its previous incarnation as t Sangh, it could never reach this l acceptance in any of the elections contested since 1960. The BJP's area concentration was the Muslim majority d of Malappuram and the Central Trava Christian belt.

Though it cannot become the lea third front as its national leaders ho proved its importance by winning 5,000 votes in 18 constituencies an 3,000 votes in 17 others. In Kerala, elections are generally won on narrow gins, neither the UDF nor the LDF can to ignore its presence in future.

Indications that the BJP was actu the side of the UDF came after the hue raised by its state leadership when th Vice-President, Ram Jethmalani, i tently said at the Trivandrum Pres that its candidates, if elected, would support to the LDF to form the Gover The BJP was encouraged to spread its wide and far because of the tren success of the Vishal Hindu Sammela in Cochin two months ago and th sympathy gained by the Rashtriya S sewak Sangh (RSS) which alone st against the violence let loose by the C Indian Trade Unions (CITU) worker the CPI-M was heading the Governm RSS in Kerala, however, is not syno with the BJP; it draws its recruits ev the Congress(I) ranks.

In its anxiety to measure i strength, the BJP set up candidates ev few constituencies where it could ha prospects of the UDF, like in Manj where the CPI candidate, Dr A. Subb







Karunakaran being sworn in and (left) a Congress(I) poster likening the LDF's manifesto to 'the Devil quoting the Scriptures'

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as able to scrape through thanks to H. nkara Alva of the BJP taking away 14,429 tes, much of which would have gone to N. amakrishnan of the Congress(I).

The most telling lesson of the May 19 ll in Kerala was the people's distrust of olitical fronts assembled on election eve. arring caste, communal and religious vo-s, the people took the opportunity to unish those whom they felt had betrayed eir trust and worsted them with single-min-d devotion. Top on their list was T.K. amakrishnan, the CPI-M home minister in e Nayanar Cabinet. In Trippunithura, a arxist citadel and the home constituency Ramakrishnan, he was humbled by an known NDP candidate, K.G.R. Kartha. The ss, which suffered most by the police policy Ramakrishnan, threw its weight behind artha to ensure his victory. The spirit andal which rocked the Nayanar Govern-ent claimed its toll in the defeat of M.K. Krishnan who was holding the excise portfolio. N.K. Kannan of 'attimari' fame, whose CITU headload workers ran amuck, forcing the trading community in Trichur to down their shutters for weeks on end, learnt the hard way the power of the ballot-box when he could not retain his Assembly seat. A.C. Jose of the Congress (Antony) who made a mockery of parliamentary democracy by exercising his casting vote as speaker to prop up the UDF Government of Karunakaran, was cast aside by the very people of Parur who sent him to the Assembly first in 1980.

Dress Rehearsal: The CPI-M, after its 21-month rule, knew the people of Kerala did not want another dose of it so soon. Therefore, it made use of the present elections as a sort of rehearsal for the next round which, going by the law of averages of the term of the Kerala Assembly, could not be beyond 1984. By its sleight of hand, the Marxists saw to it that all the CPI leaders, whose presence and performance in the Assembly gave them an inferiority complex intellectually speaking, were eliminated in this round itself.

Among them was the former chief minister, P.K. Vasudevan Nair, seeking re-election from Alleppey, cradle of the CPI trade union movement. Besides belonging to the CPI elitist group which the CPI-M wanted to destroy, Nair made the mistake of making an emotional speech in the Assembly in connection with the murder of a CPI worker at the hands of the Marxists during the Nayanar regime saying: "Words fail me to describe the gravity of the crime. Therefore I am sitting down." Marxist workers were heard saying in Alleppey on polling day, "Let Nair sit down at home for a change."

E. Gopalakrishna Menon, the first Communist ever to get elected to a legislature in India, was sacrificed at the altar of

KERALA MINISTRY

Fragile Future

AFTER a long period of political instability Kerala's 13th ministry headed by Congress(I) leader K. Karunakaran, was sworn in on May 24. The jumbo cabinet of 19 members is the largest ever since the formation of the state.

Karunakaran justified the size of the cabinet, saying that it is the UDF's policy to give representation to all parties. According to A.A. Rahim, Union deputy minister for law and company affairs, who was sent by the Congress(I) as an observer, Karunakaran was forced to make compromises under the compulsion of coalition politics. Even E.K. Nayanar, the former CPI-M chief minister, had to exceed the limits recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission to limit the size of the ministry to one-tenth of the total number of legislators. Karunakaran altered this norm still more drastically by having 19 cabinet ministers in a legislature consisting of 140 members.

Hard Bargaining: Karunakaran had to make hefty concessions to his coalition partners. C.H. Mohammed Koya of the Indian Union Muslim League was determined to become deputy chief minister and by hard bargaining he also managed to get the industries portfolio for his colleague E. Ahmed. The two Kerala Congresses were equally keen on retaining the portfolios they held in the last ministry. Karunakaran was also besieged



Ravi (left) and Koya: power brokers

by an army of loyal lieutenants who were clamouring for ministerial berths. But in the end the Congress(I) got a bad deal in the allocation of portfolios. Said a Youth Congress(I) worker: "Karunakaran was interested only in the chief ministership and in the process our ministers were left with only irrigation, Harijan welfare and transport."

Trivandrum district was left without a minister in the UDF Cabinet. Since the chief minister was elected from Nemon in Trivandrum district and Trivandrum has no other representatives in the Cabinet, political observers have rushed to the conclusion that Karunakaran may vacate his other constituency, Mala, and retain Nemon.

The minister who will become the most powerful man in the Cabinet is the Home Minister Vayalar Ravi. A.K. Antony's 'conscience keeper' and the man who was chiefly responsible for bringing Antony out of the Marxist camp. Ravi is an outspoken, aggressive politician who is highly ambitious and aspires to the top job. Ravi who is making his debut in the state Assembly told INDIA TODAY: "I am sitting on a hot seat and one single error will wipe me out." His boss A.K. Antony however says: "I am confident that Ravi, the strategist of our party will come out with flying colours."

Factionalism: The UDF born of a ramshackle unity forged between many disparate elements has always had to contend with factionalism. The Kerala Congress (Mani) faction is smarting under the slight it had to suffer when the rival Kerala Congress (Joseph) group got eight MLAS returned compared to their own six. K.M. Mani feels that the Joseph group had worked to defeat its candidates in some of the constituencies. The Joseph group alleges that the Mani group will leave the UDF sooner or later and join the Marxists. Said a highly emotional Mani: "I am more sinned against than sinning. Certain groups in the UDF are gunning for me, but I prefer to be restrained rather break up the Front." Said a journalist who has seen many ministries forming and then splintering: "The fate of the coalition and the state's political stability hinges on K.M. Mani and P.J. Joseph."

The Marxists feel that the coalition ministry's wafer thin majority will be its doom but according to M.M. Jacob, a Congress(I) candidate from Kerala for the Rajya Sabha, the coalition will bring stability to the state. Anyway the public are waiting to find out whether the twice unlucky Chief Minister Karunakaran will reach the coveted 100 days in office.

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Mala, Karunakaran's "pativrata" (chaste wife), on the specious plea the Marxists lacked a candidate of Menon's stature and calibre to stand against the leader of the UDF. E. Chandrasekharan Nair, civil supplies minister and the only one in the Nayanar Cabinet to receive universal praise for the dynamism with which he ensured equitable distribution of essential commodities and helped hold the price line by organising 'maveli' stores during the Onam festival, was compelled to move from Chadayamangalam, which he represented in the dissolved assembly, and made to face his Cabinet colleague who had since defected to the UDF, R. Balakrishna Pillai of the Kerala Congress (Mani), in Kottarakkara, whose electorate are known for their fidelity to Pillai, irrespective of his party affiliation, which varies with each election.

By and large, the LDF had done remarkably well considering the limited objective of the Marxists in the May poll. Less than 1,00,000 votes out of 9,526,895 polled marked the difference between the UDF and the LDF. While the UDF got 48.27 per cent of the valid votes polled and secured 77 seats, LDF was not far behind with 47.28 per cent but got only 63 seats. The LDF share of popular vote in 1980 was 50.7 per cent.

Considering that the bulk of the 2,22,314 votes polled by the BJP went in favour of the UDF candidates, it would not be wrong to conclude that Karunakaran got his third chance to become chief minister by courtesy of the BJP. The election also pricked the A.K. Antony bubble that he is a charismatic leader next only to Mrs Gandhi. But for his riding on the shoulders of the CPI-M in 1980 and the Congress(I) now, his vote-catching capacity would have been the same as that of Devraj Urs of Karnataka.

The constituent parties of the UDF, unlike the LDF which has a semblance of cohesion, are held together only by the spoils system, which explains Karunakaran opting for the largest ever ministry Kerala has seen, far exceeding the norms laid down by the administrative reforms commission.

The Congress(A) abounds with leftout ministerial aspirants. The entire Kerala Congress(M) is smarting under its poor showing compared to its arch rival, the Kerala Congress(J), and nurses a feeling of being let down. Karunakaran may consider himself third time lucky but the ministry he is heading is the 13th in Kerala. When Richard III made the incredibly generous offer of "a horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!", he was not able to escape the challenge of the Earl of Richmond, who killed him to become Henry VII of England. The horse is the election symbol of the Kerala Congress(M). The CPI-M is aware of the barter value of a horse for a kingdom.

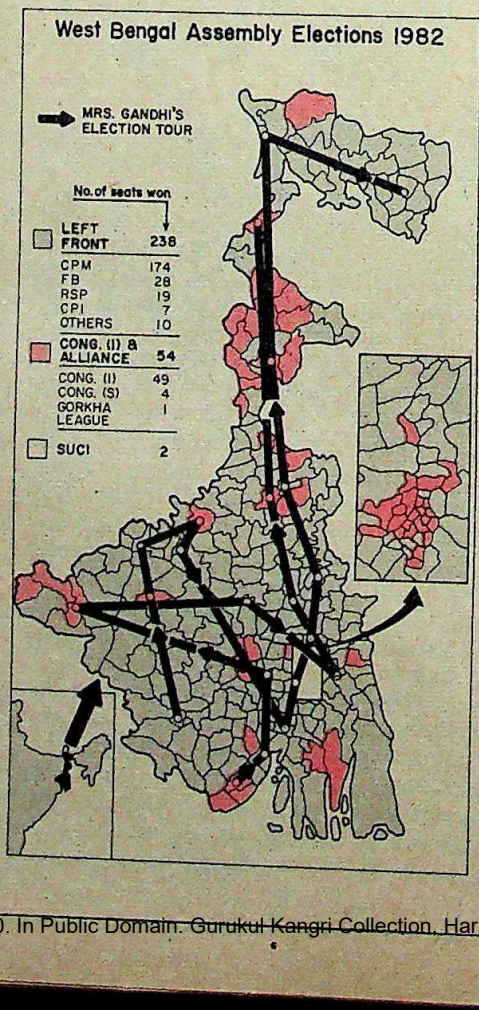
WEST BENGAL

Keeping To The Left



FAR AWAY from the hurly-burly of horse-trading in MLAs in Haryana, on a busy Wednesday morning in Calcutta's sprawling Raj Bhavan, Jyoti Basu, 66, appeared before the television camera in his trade-mark dhoti-and-kurta to be sworn in as the chief minister of West Bengal for the second successive term. There were no heartburns, no griping in public, no auctioneering in MLAs: the overwhelming majority of the Left Front—238 in an Assembly of 294—had precluded all possibility of the characteristic soap-opera of north Indian politics. As a Western diplomat in Calcutta, going round the polling booths in the city on May 19, archly put it: "Bengali democracy has come really close to the East European variant of the 'people's democracy' where nobody expects an upsetting victory or defeat."

The fatalist conviction about the Left Front's victory would have come true to the last detail but for a few stray coils of storm cloud that gathered over the city of Calcutta. In 11 out of its 22 constituencies, the Left Front candidates were defeated by the Congress(I). This again was not unexpected in the light of the 1980 parliamentary elections when 12 of the Assembly segments in the city brought more votes for the Congress(I) candidates. But, even a day before the recent elections pro-Left pollsters were conceding only five to five seats to "the hand". As the counting process folded up, the Left Front finished with 6,91,885 votes in Calcutta, a rise of 28.9 per cent over its 1980 performance against the Congress(I)'s 6,28,353, a 19.5 per cent rise.



Short Shrift: In the districts, however, the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)-led Front made short shrift of the Congress(I) with clockwork precision, cutting through the "hand's" challenge like a lawn-mower would cut across the well-manicured lawn. Still, a few prickly patches stood up in the manicured Leftist lawn, particularly in the Muslim areas on the north bank of the Hooghly river, and in Hooghly and 24-Parganas districts on the doorsteps of Calcutta. The Congress(I) improved its strength from a paltry 22 in the previous Assembly to 49; with seven other anti-Left members, the 56-member Opposition bench would just fill a sixth of the dome-shaped Vidhan Sabha but could still be the minister's but strident bee in the Marxist bonnet.

The Left Front Chairman, Promode Dasgupta, who is also the state secretary of the CPI-M, refuses to detect any pattern in the defeat of six ministers, including Ashok Mitra, former finance minister and Brain acknowledged think-tank. Said Dasgupta: "The Left Front has gone ahead, it has not gone down." As he unreeled statistics at a crowded post-poll press conference in his sleek newly-built party office, Basu was evidently burning his midnight oil to find new men.

Last fortnight, he chose a midget-sized cabinet of five representing the four major constituents of the Front—the Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), the Communist Party of India (CPI), besides his own CPI-M. But he was obviously in a dilemma; said he: "For the time being I am to take on a few more portfolios (myself) which means that for the time being we have to shelve our original plan according to which I should have been kept free as much as possible so that I could oversee the administration."

Significant Losses: The high-point of the West Bengal poll was the defeat of two arch ideologues of the Marxists—Mahboob (I). Those who lost to the Congress(I)'s Haimi Bo

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formation Minister Buddhadeb
nattacharya, and Education Minister
artha Dey. The three men in their own ways
ft lasting impressions on the policies of the
ront Government, particularly those
fecting the urban and semi-urban mid-
le class, Mitra's crusade against San-
naita Savings Company, the get-rich-quick
avings bonanza (INDIA TODAY, February 28)
ightened his stature as a principled econo-
ic bureaucrat but made him an anathema
at least 4,000 depositor-families concen-
in his predominantly upper middle
ss Rashbehari constituency.

Bhattacharya, who is the architect of
e Front's aggressive and high-profile
ublic relations, lost out to Prafulla Kanti
hosh, former Congress minister, scion of a
ewspaper-owning family and the Don of
orth Calcutta's Congress toughs. Dey,
ho lost out to a local lad in the semi-urban
nstituency of Bankura, stirred a hornet's

Bengal thrives on outmoded agricultural relations.

In three other districts—Nadia in south Bengal and Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar in north Bengal—the Congress(I) was wiped out. Barring one seat that went to the Nepali-dominated Gorkha League, none of the overtly communal and regional parties could win a single seat in the Assembly. The much-touted Jharkhand Mukti Morcha of the Midnapore Santhals drew a blank; so did the Muslim League and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Also gone were such irrelevancies as the Janata Party, the Lok Dal and the Congress(J). Said Hiren Bose, editor of the Leftist journal, *Darpan*: "It was a fight between two ideologies, authoritarianism and democracy. It is heartwarming that the people voted for the correct ideology." Even the Congress(I) camp felt that the West Bengal electorate would never follow the Congress(I) and the newly-elected MLA from the Jorabagan constituency in north Calcutta: "We have gained strength even in some difficult areas. If we had a better organisation, all our candidates who had lost by margins of 5,000 votes or less would have won."

In Calcutta, the Congress(I) is now running up its colours just as high as the Marxists: as many as four of their 'tough' leaders—Mukherjee, Ghosh, former state Congress(I) president Ajit Panja, and state Youth Congress(I) chief Somen Mitra—have won from the city. The Marxists apprehend that this might prompt the backstreet goons of the Congress(I) to bare their fangs in the immediate future and create a law-and-order situation with the rider of a come-hitherish call for President's rule. Their fears are corroborated by the strident complaints of 'manipulation' of the electoral rolls by the Marxists unleashed by



(From left) Jyoti Basu, Ashok Mitra, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, Haimi Bose and Prafulla Kanti Ghosh: a clear verdict

st three years ago by jettisoning English
om the curricula of primary education.

The counting of votes in Mitra's con-
ituency, with its ding-dong course (at one
age Mitra led by 48 votes with 46 booths to
), provided a classic illustration of the
iddle class' ambiguous response to the
arxists. Dasgupta and the party hierarchy
ill not readily admit it, but Mitra himself,
ho went back to teaching last fortnight,
id in an interview: "The middle class needs
be persuaded more and more; it must be
ld clearly where its basic interest lies."

Swamped: However, in every other cor-
of the state, the Bengali *bhadraloks'*
ipathy to the Marxists was swamped by
e surging tornado of mass support for the
ft Front. In Burdwan, the most advanced
ricultural district of the state, whose wes-
rn part also houses the richest industrial
rawl, the Left Front won each of the seats.
turally the industrial workers had voted
masse for the Front, nor did the pre-
minantly agricultural belt in eastern
rdwan give any quarter to the Con-
ss(I). This knocks the bottom out of
academic hypothesis that Marxism in Kerala pattern of omnibus coalitions and unprincipled alliances. "As long as the Marxists are here we are destined to remain as the only alternative," said Dinabandhu Bairagi, a primary school teacher who, as the Congress(I) candidate at Satgachia, lost out to Jyoti Basu by a margin of 27,000 votes.

Merged: In the earlier Assembly, the Janata Party, the BJP, Gorkha League, Muslim League, Congress(S) and the rabidly anti-Marxist Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI), put together, had 26 MLAs. Evidently, in the crucible of the past five years' politics, these separate rivulets of dissent have merged into the state's main Opposition channel—the Congress(I). The Janata indeed emerged as the incredible shrinking party, its 17 seats having gone mostly to the Congress(I). And, the swell in the Congress(I) ranks, from 22 to 49 now, has but one lesson: the Bengali voters would put opposition eggs in one basket instead of many.

Many in the Congress(I) interpret their performance in West Bengal as a victory, however pyrrhic. Said Subrata Mukherjee, tough youth leader of the Congress(S), an electoral ally of the Congress(I), last fortnight.

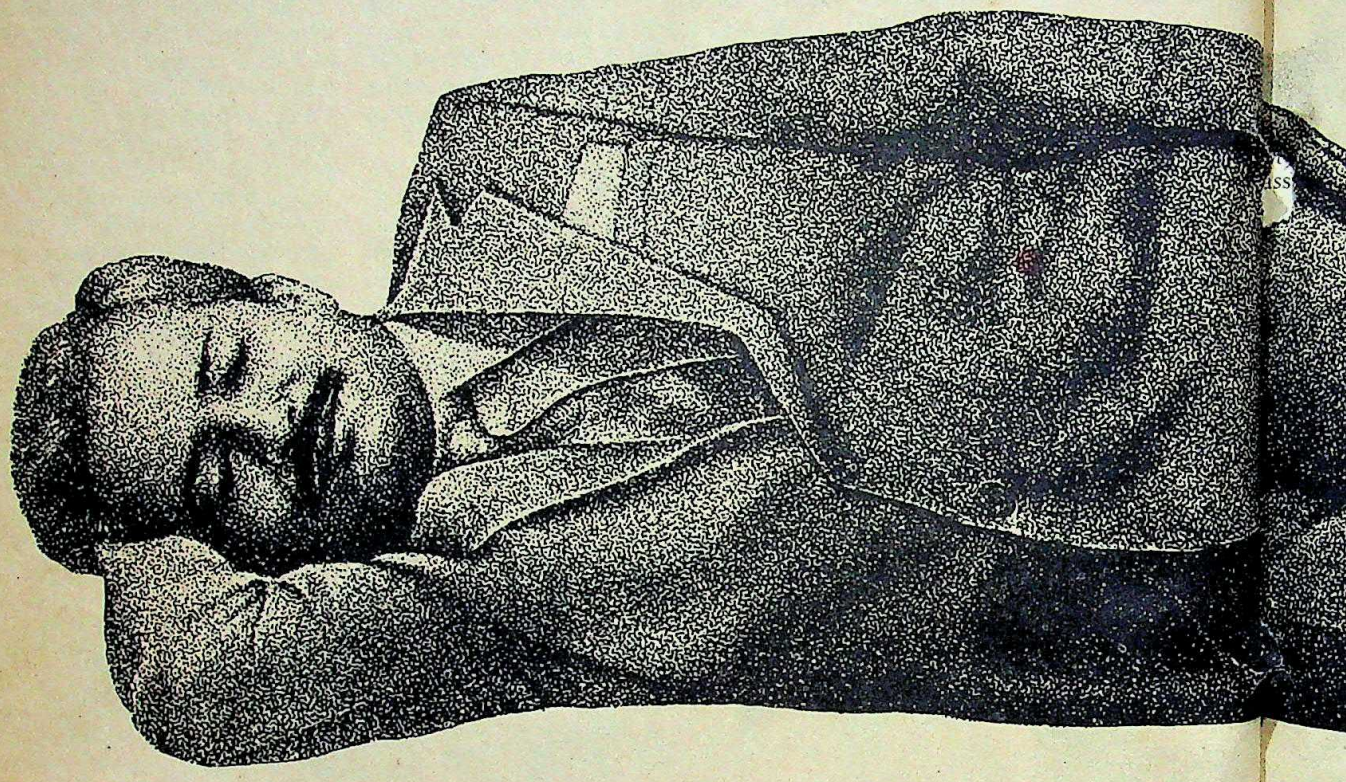
Though the outcome of the West Bengal elections were quite well-known and generally devoid of dramatic frills, the campaigning indeed provided a field day for graffiti artists, poster designers and authors of some mind-blowing campaigns. Utpal Dutt, the Marxist theatre personality, staged his street-corner play, *30th April*, based on Congress(I)-inspired violence in Calcutta on that day last year, in various parts of the city. Film actor Soumitra Chatterjee (who was to Satyajit Ray what Mastroianni was to Fellini or Toshiro Mifune to Kurosawa) went round Bhattacharya's constituency of Shyampukur with folded hands, canvassing for votes in favour of the young information minister. The walls were choc-a-bloc with graffiti depicting Mrs Gandhi as a four-colour boa constrictor. And, long before the panels of candidates were announced, the Marxists' omnipresent tar-and-brush brigade had scrawled on most of the walls: "Site reserved till 1987." A remarkable foresight.

—SUMIT MITRA with SUMANTA SEN in Calcutta

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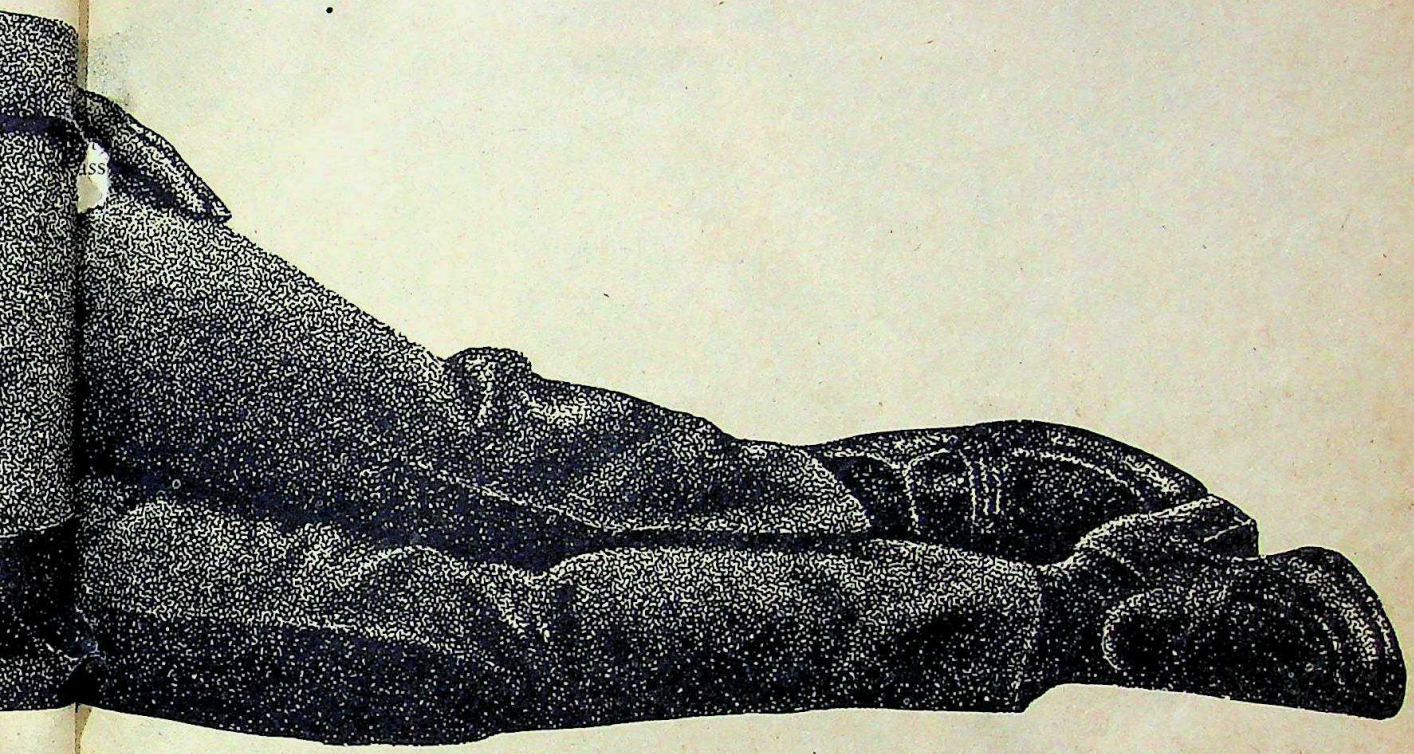
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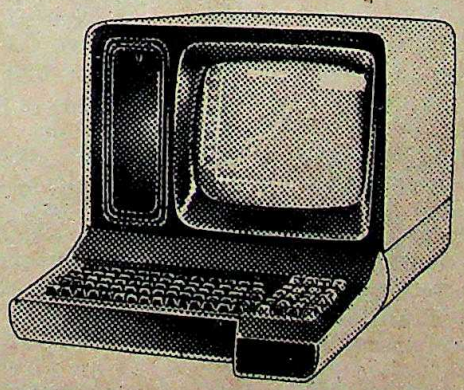
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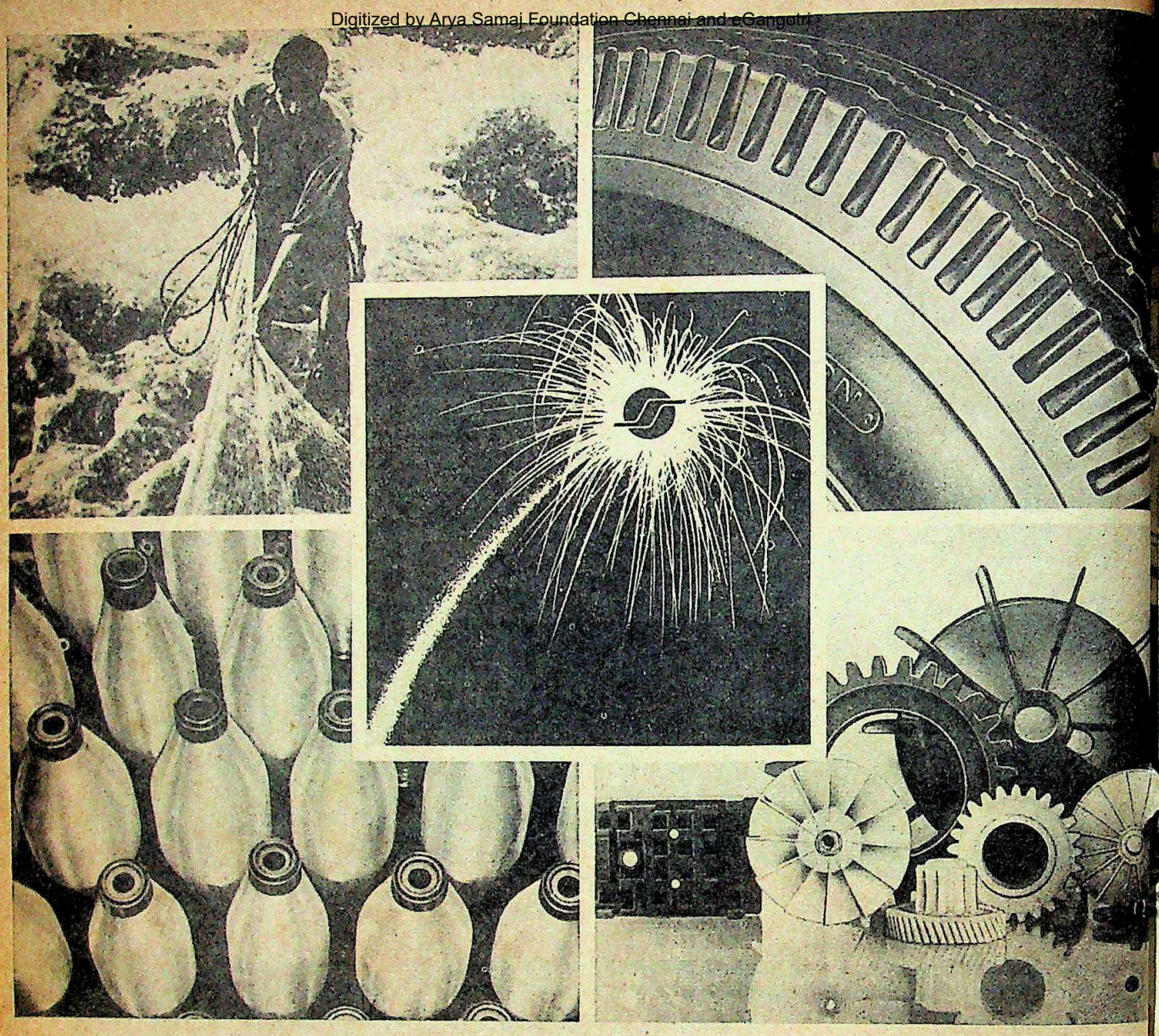
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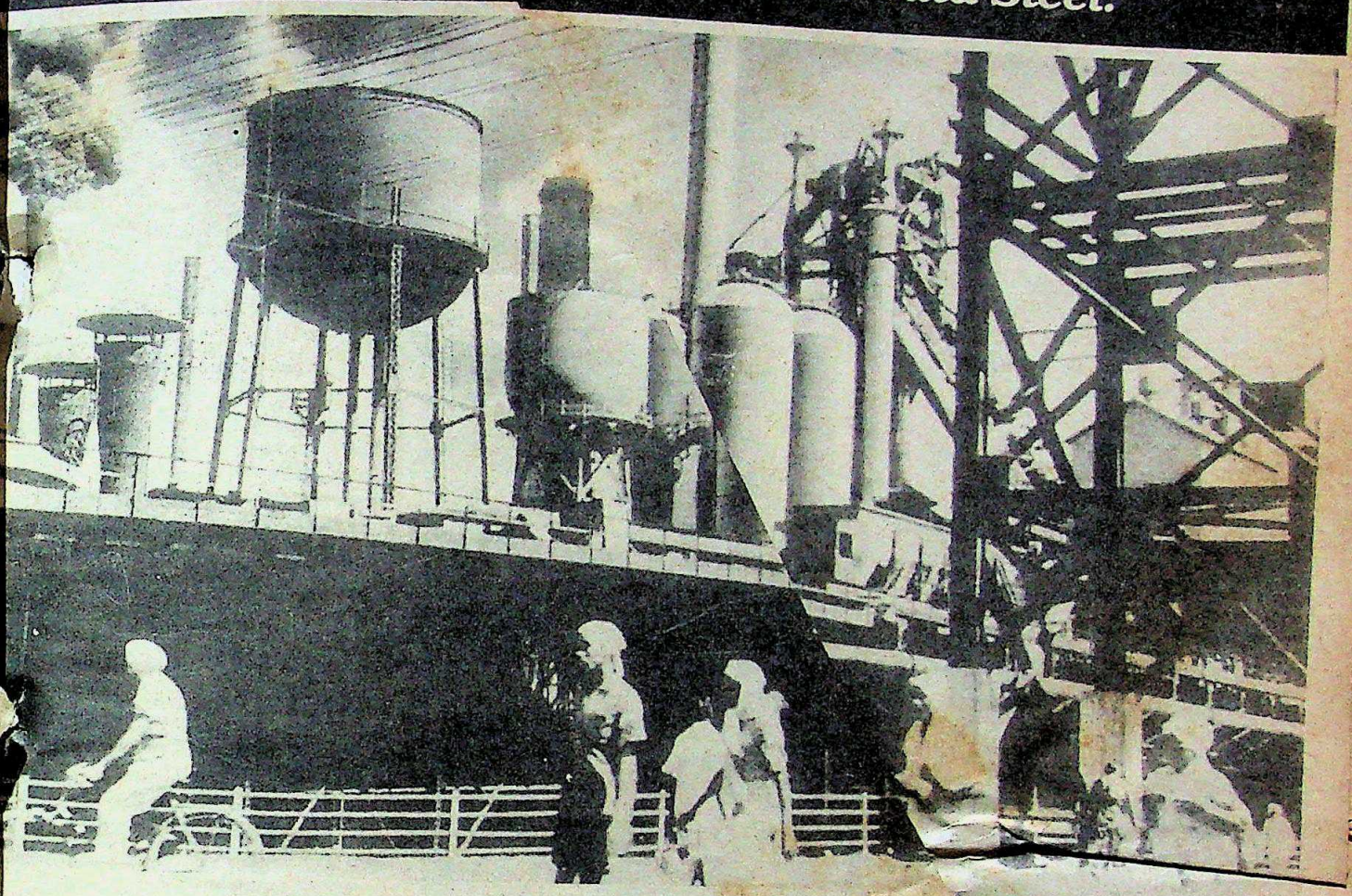
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THE PRESIDENT

A Tricky Choice

BEFORE the dust had settled on the keenly-fought mini-general election, the battle for Rashtrapati Bhavan had begun. The five-year term of President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy finishes on July 26 and the Election Commission set the ball rolling by appointing Rajya Sabha Secretary-General Sudarshan Aggarwal as returning officer for the election of India's seventh President. As official machinery buried itself in election logistics, the ruling Congress(I) and the Opposition rolled up its sleeves for the fight. Cheered by Mrs Gandhi's less than impressive performance in May's state assembly elections, opposition parties were searching for a candidate who would be supported by all non-Congress(I) groups and would be able to carry the battle into Congress(I) ranks.



Hidayatullah: choice by convention

As the Congress(I) has a comfortable majority in Parliament and the state assemblies—8,19,794 votes out of a total of 12,37,037—its nominee is sure to win. But the prime minister has not made her choice known; said an All India Congress Committee(I) office bearer: "It is not a simple question. We have to select a person who is not only dependable but will not play into the Opposition's hands in the future." The ruling party is treading carefully because a wrong choice at this juncture may upset Mrs Gandhi's applecart, loosening her grip on the party, a grip already tested in significant measure by the powerful regional satrapies in the Congress(I).

Consensus Demand: Opposition leaders have started campaigning for a consensus candidate while Mrs Gandhi holds her cards close to her chest. Citing the selection of Sanjiva Reddy and Vice-President M. Hidayatullah—both were elected unanimously—they have urged her to settle the issue at a joint meeting of the Congress(I) and the Opposition. Says Ram Jethmalani, Bharatiya Janata Party vice-president: "When the Janata Party was in power, it was in favour of a consensus candidate. Why can't she reciprocate? After all, the presidential post is meant for the entire country and not for a particular political party."

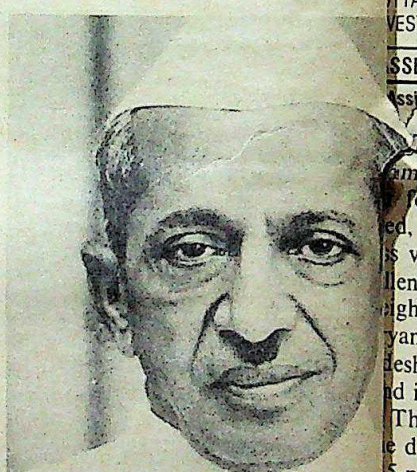


Reddy: the final days

The Opposition has decided to float at least six names for the post. According to Jethmalani, they include former Supreme Court justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, noted educationist V.V. John and Hidayatullah. The Opposition's strategy goes much further than unity and is designed to embarrass Mrs Gandhi. If she rejects Hidayatullah's candidature, which she is likely to do because of the independent and impartial stand he has regularly been adopting as chairman of the Rajya Sabha, she runs the risk of annoying the Muslim minority and will also be accused of flouting the convention by which the vice-president is sponsored for the higher post, a convention to which former vice-president B.D. Jatti is the solitary exception in 35 years. In 1969, the pre-split Congress sponsored Sanjiva Reddy, the then Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Mrs Gandhi opposed the move in favour of the then vice-president V.V. Giri, although that was for different reasons.

By ignoring Hidayatullah's claim, Mrs Gandhi is also likely to alienate the Muslims within the Congress(I) who are already unhappy because she has replaced Muslim chief ministers with non-Muslims in Assam and Maharashtra. Mrs Gandhi cannot afford to hurt susceptibilities in a party with over 50 Muslim MP's and over 100 Muslim MLA's in her party. In addition, the Sikhs also feel slighted, as testified to by the spurt in extremist activities in the state. Says a senior Union Cabinet minister: "We can't afford to ignore the claims of the two major religious minority groups which have traditionally been our voters. We must be sure that they can also reach the top and participate in the running of the country."

Dissidence: But the most important factor at present is cross-voting, which has



Jatti: under consideration

ared its head in the Rajya Sabha elections this year: over 150 MLA's ignored their party then. If local leaders—Kamlapati Tripathi, V.C. Shukla, A.R. Antulay, Jagannath Mishra and Madhavsinh Solanki—don't like her candidate, things could become difficult for him. Antulay and Tripathi have control over one lakh votes. Besides, Vishwanath Bahuguna's victory in Garhwal will upset the equation in Uttar Pradesh where he has his men in V.P. Singh's ministry. If 100 MP's and 300 MLA's of the ruling party vote in defiance of the whip, Mrs Gandhi's candidate would lose. But that possibility is remote at present.

The opposition parties have tried again tried for a consensus candidate. In 1952, they failed to convince Jawaharlal Nehru and their K.T. Shah polled

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PRESIDENTIAL CALCULUS

	VALUE OF VOTE (1)	CONGRESS(I) NUMBER OF ELECTED SEATS (2)	CONGRESS(I) ASSIGNED VALUE* (1×2)	NON-CONGRESS(I) NUMBER OF ELECTED SEATS (3)	NON-CONGRESS(I) ASSIGNED VALUE* (1×3)
LOK SABHA	850	353	3,00,050	188	1,59,800
RAJYA SABHA	850	119	1,01,150	111	94,350
PARLIAMENT STRENGTH		**472**	**4,01,200**	**299**	**2,54,150**
ANDHRA PRADESH	181	251	45,431	44	7,964
BIHAR	215	189	40,635	136	29,240
GUJARAT	186	144	26,784	44	8,184
HARYANA	142	36	5,112	54	7,668
HIMACHAL PRADESH	62	32	1,984	36	2,232
JAMMU & KASHMIR	77	10	770	67	5,159
KARNATAKA	165	185	30,525	40	660
KERALA	181	20	3,620	120	21,720
MADHYA PRADESH	244	163	39,772	74	18,056
MAHARASHTRA	218	227	49,486	61	13,298
MANIPUR	24	36	864	24	576
MEGHALAYA	22	2	44	58	1,276
NAGALAND	13	20	260	40	520
ASSAM	116	—	—	—	—
PUNJAB	142	64	9,088	53	7,526
ORISSA	182	119	21,658	28	5,096
RAJASTHAN	171	145	24,795	55	9,405
SIKKIM	10	23	230	7	70
TAMIL NADU	206	29	5,974	206	42,436
TRIPURA	34	2	68	58	1,972
UTTAR PRADESH	261	326	85,086	99	*25,839*
WEST BENGAL	185	56	10,360	238	*44,030*
ASSEMBLY STRENGTH		**2,079**	**4,0.546**	**1,542**	***2,52,927***

*Assigned Value is based on a population factor for each constituency (Value of Vote) times the number of elected seats.

7 votes to Rajendra Prasad's 507,400. ...munist leader Ajoy Ghose repeated the ... for the Opposition in 1957, was re-...ed, followed by another decisive Con-...s victory. The party faced its first real ...llenge in 1967 when it suffered setbacks ...ight states—Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, ...yana, Punjab, West Bengal, Uttar ...desh, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh ...d its parliamentary strength declined. The party's share of Parliament votes ...e down from 72.42 per cent in 1952 to ...5 per cent in 1967, and from 68.83 per ... to 47.08 per cent in the state assemblies.

Mrs Gandhi rejected a consensus and ... Opposition's K. Subba Rao, former ...reme Court chief justice, lost to Zakir ...ain, the first Muslim President, by a ... of a little over one lakh votes—which ...slates into just 40 MP's.

Full Majority: Mrs Gandhi rejected the ...ensus offer again in 1974 when Giri ...d. The Congress's Fakhruddin Ali ...ed defeated combined opposition can-...e Tridib Chaudhary. In 1977, however, ... Gandhi came to an agreement with the ...g Janata Party and Reddy was elected ...posed: she surrendered because the ...a Party had secured a full majority after ...lving the Congress-ruled state assem-... Earlier, when the Janata Party took ... in March 1977, it had the support of ...3,14,231 votes as against 5,35,641 of the ...gress.

In 1982, however, Mrs Gandhi decided to go it alone. She has a majority of votes in Parliament and in 11 of 23 states. Though the Congress(I) is in a minority in smaller states like Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and bigger states like West Bengal, it has massive vote banks in big states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar. It is also expected to get the support of regional groups like Tamil Nadu's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Jammu & Kashmir's National Conference, and two factions of the Muslim League.

With all this clout, party insiders feel that the prime minister is determined to install a person who will pose the minimum danger to her constitutional plans. The names of Defence Minister R. Venkataraman, former defence minister Swaran Singh and Jatti are being circulated. Jatti is under active consideration because he was humiliated by the Janata Party in 1977. He came out of obscurity last year when he handled dissident activities in Karnataka and has been consulted by Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi on many political issues.

Opposition leaders are determined to fight his choice. Says Limaye: "We want a person who is known for his non-partisan attitude and has a certain national and international recognition. After all, it is the question of electing the head of state of the largest democracy in the world." Retorts Narain Dutt Tiwari, industry minister: "Mrs Gandhi has proved that only she can maintain democracy in this country and the presidential nominee has to be selected keeping in view the massive mandate given to her policies in various states."

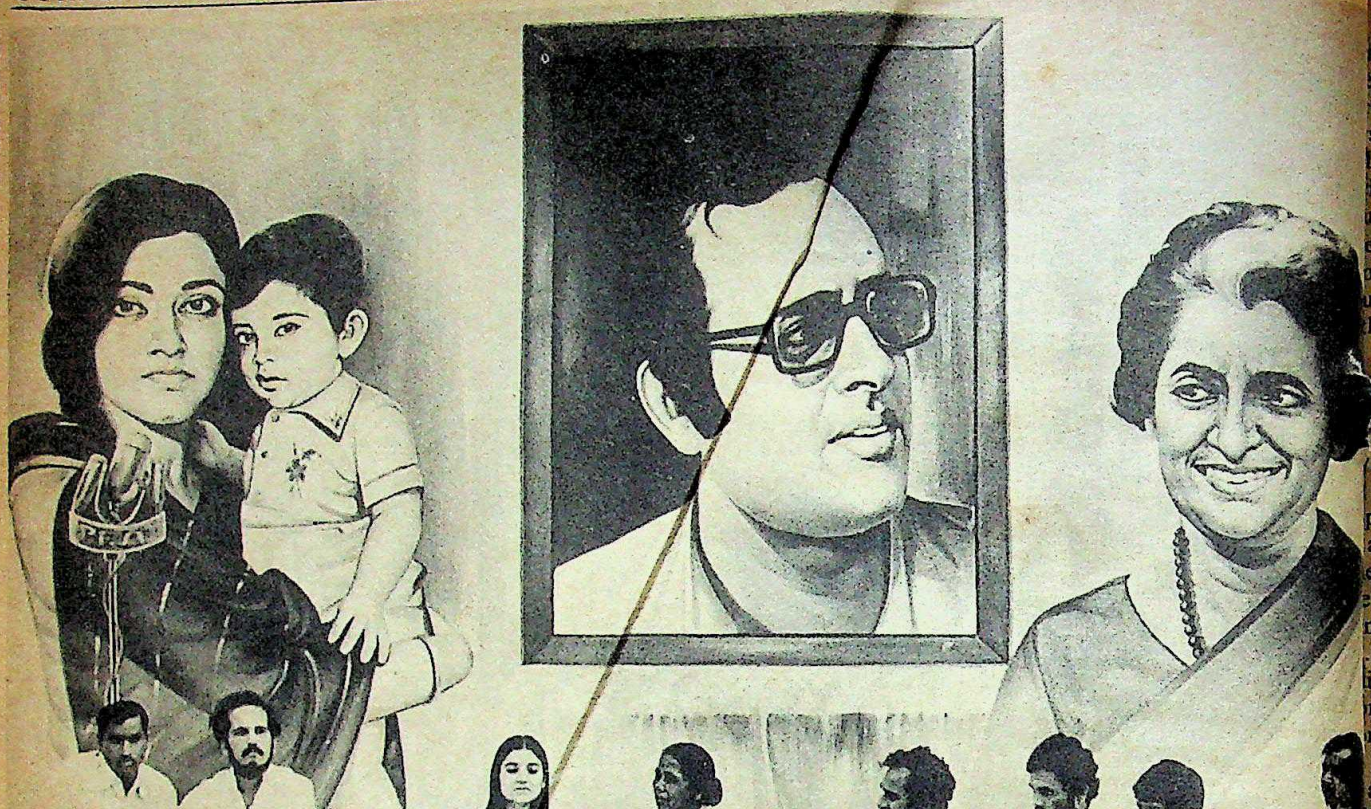
Crucial Margin: In the flip-flopping course of India's current political history, the President enjoys just that crucial margin of discretionary authority by which momentous executive decisions can be stalled in mid-course and, alternatively, cliff-hangers can just be pushed over. In 1977, Jatti showed the way by precipitating a copy-book impasse when he refused to dislodge the Congress-led state governments even though Charan Singh, as the Janata home minister at the Centre, wanted it. In 1979, Reddy himself led the Janata Party a merry dance when he turned down Jagjivan Ram's plea to form the government at the Centre.

A troublesome President can still give Mrs Gandhi goose-pimples, specially so in the difficult days that are lyng ahead for her strife-torn, tension-ridden, crumbling party. The fact is that Reddy was indeed needling her when his secretariat sent 152 complaints of corruption against six Congress(I) chief ministers, 40 state ministers and six Central ministers for the Government's "comments". These are pin-pricks when the prime minister enjoys an overwhelming majority in Parliament. But it can sting harder, and with more devastating consequences in turbulent times.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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PICTURE BY BHAWAN SINGH

Maneka and friends in Nagpur: well-

MANEKA GANDHI

That Familiar Feeling

THE RECEPTION was impressive: large crowds shouting pro- and anti-slogans at the airport, a cavalcade of at least 50 vehicles jamming the route to the city and larger crowds at the hotel, the ashram and the public meeting which required all of 500 policemen to control. Maneka Gandhi's visit to Nagpur last fortnight lasted just over 24 hours but provided clear indications of the strategy she will adopt in her public appearances in coming months.

Ostensibly Maneka's purpose to visit Nagpur was to seek the 86-year-old *bhoodan* leader Vinoba Bhave's blessings at his Paunar ashram 65 km outside the city. More specifically, her successful public meeting in the city was designed to test public reaction seven weeks after her break from 1 Safdarjung Road to attend the Lucknow Convention in late March. Judging by the reasonably large and well-ordered crowd of at least 15,000 that showed up to see her, the initial curiosity value she provoked is rapidly converting to worthwhile entertainment value, not necessarily a discouraging factor in what is likely to be for Maneka a long march into the political arena. Plans are already being firmed up for a discreet but obviously well-calculated assault on the bastions of power.

Scheduled to visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar and address a similar meeting in Jullundur later in the month, Maneka now intends to take up travelling across the country and addressing public gatherings throughout the summer. As she said in her Nagpur address, reading from a typed script: "I have been getting encouragement from Sanjay's true friends all over the country. To collect this scattered strength I will be going to as many states as possible."

Maneka's speech was mainly a rehash of her Lucknow address: a reappraisal of Sanjay's five-point programme, a re
ance that her devotion and respect fo
Gandhi remained undimmed as we
forceful denial of her alleged links w
RSS, CIA or any political party. Her co
Akbar Ahmed, the expelled MLA from
Pradesh, however, minced no
Launching a blistering attack on the
"office-bearers of the Youth Cong
who were nowhere near Mrs Gandhi
1977 to 1980", Ahmed focussed his
on Youth Congress(I) President G
Nabi Azad, an MP from the neighb
Akola constituency. An indication of
calibre, said Ahmed, was the total
votes he had polled from Jammu in th
election. As for the rest of Sanjay's
Congress, their role today was little
than stoning his widow's car in Lu
Ahmed's rhetoric extended to inclu
widow's two-year-old son as well.
believe," he stormed, "that I can be
over by the CIA or that Sanjay's wido
But is it also to be believed that his li
is saleable?"

Stagy Show: Maneka's address

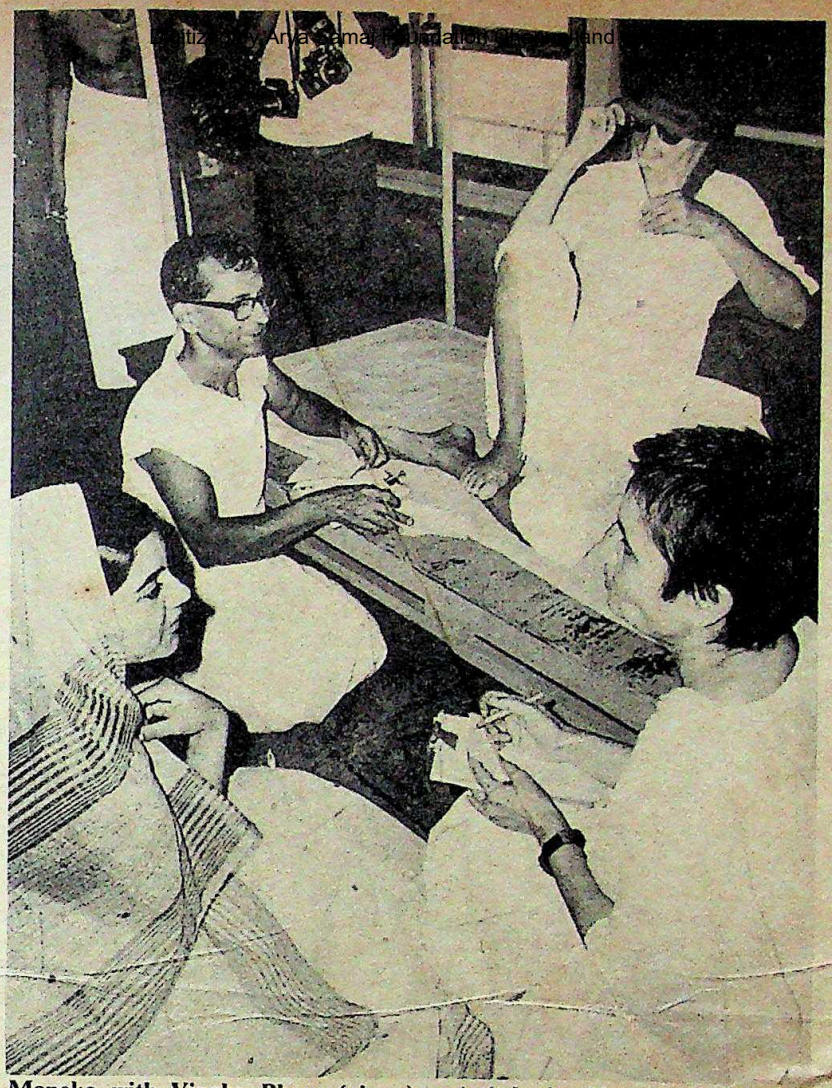
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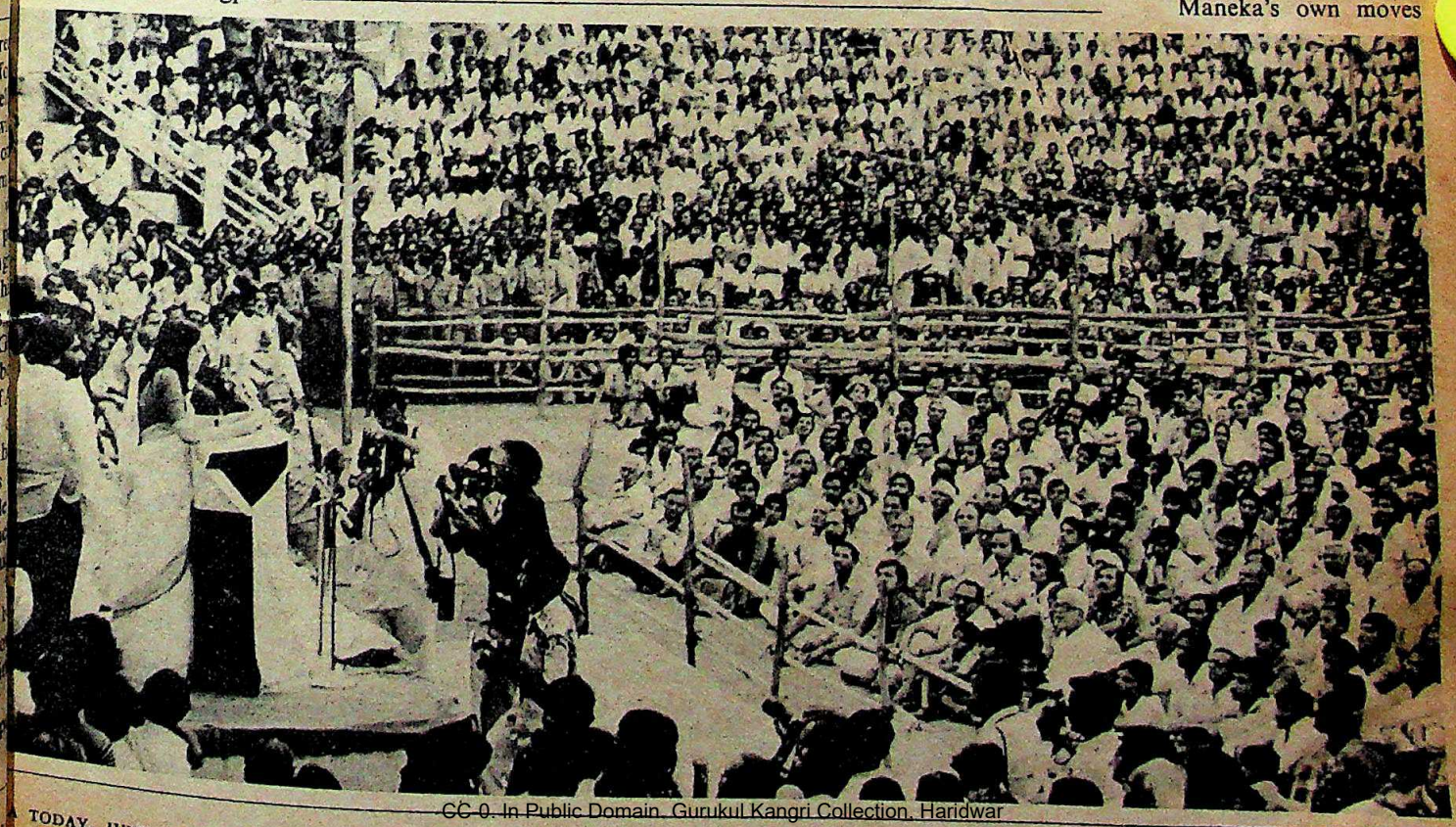
mparison—her hold over language is imper- and her delivery fal- —but her show went off hout a hitch. A syrupy ic about Sanjay set to usic was piped through eakers for thronging owds in the open-air sta- um called Chitnis Park. her *filmi* touches included vast, luridly coloured kcloth showing Maneka- h-child and Mrs Gandhi king a portrait of San- Against this backdrop, on a high rostrum, peared the young widow a crisp white cotton sari. proceeded to garland portrait of her late hus- nd as the spotlights went The impeccable organi- ion of the scenario, lifted m weaker moments in mbay movies, was clearly to bleed stonier hear- and a few did. Said Seema khare, formerly convenor the Maharashtra Pradesh gress(I) Mahila Front, now president of the jay Vichar Manch: "In e of her eminent person- Mrs Gandhi ended up aving like a traditional ther-in-law."

The show in Nagpur was organised by Mahesh Purohit, a former Maharashtra Youth Congress leader whose present credentials are unclear; what is clear is that Purohit, like hundreds of Youth Congress volunteers of the Sanjay era, in his present disgruntlement, is ready to jump on the Maneka bandwagon. In doing so, Rajiv Gandhi is the indirect target of attack. The tactic is adopted by Ahmed and Maneka themselves who pointedly evoke Mrs Gandhi as their leader while continuing to heap insults on those around her. Every poster at a Maneka meeting shows Mrs Gandhi flanked by Sanjay and Maneka; every speech is devoted to Sanjay and his five-point programme; every attack against Youth Congress(I) functionaries is followed by acknowledgement of Mrs Gandhi as the supreme leader. The face-saving validity of the exercise is convincing enough to have placed the ruling party in a bind: although they have suspended Ahmed they have not followed up by expelling him.

Maneka's own moves



Maneka with Vinoba Bhave (above) and (below) addressing the Nagpur meeting: rehashed rhetoric

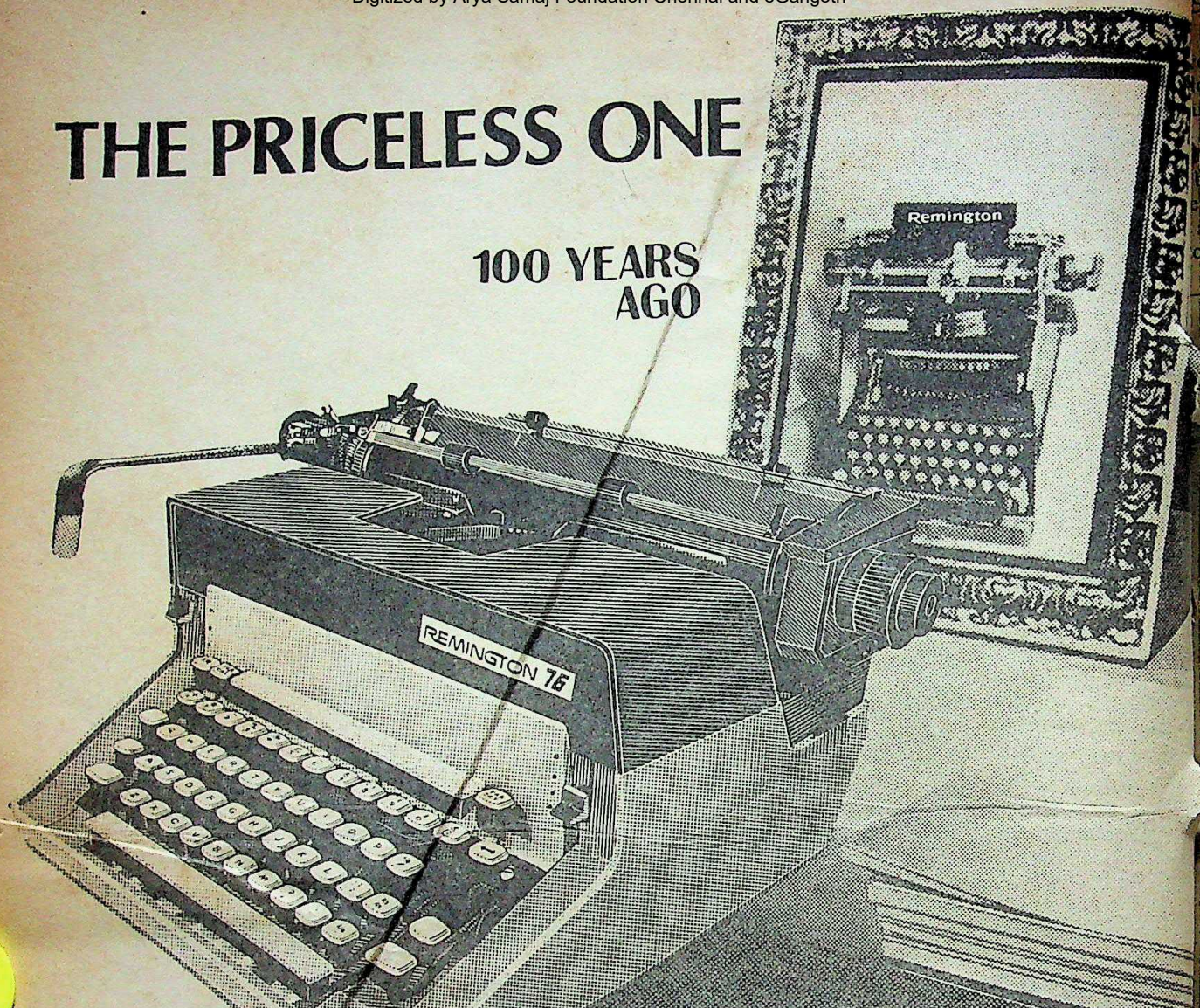


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oughout the Nagpur-Paunar visit, meti- ously orchestrated in terms of perfor- nce, hardly disguised her shrewder politi- nature. She made no demur when the ient Acharya, so hard of hearing he had be passed questions in writing, suggested e refrain from politics and devote herself t life of Gandhian labour. Like a soli- ous widow she kept her eyes glued to her prayer-book, as she chanted *mantras* along with the ashram's inmates.

But on the plane back to Delhi, her chief concerns were less than Gandhian. She wished to know if any of the national dailies were there to cover her trip and which of the local papers had blacked out her trip and which had taken notice.

Stepping out at New Delhi's Palam Airport, her first query was to ask if the first of the assembly election results were out yet—a factor certain to influence her moves in months ahead. For Maneka is fast becoming the irritating but constantly elusive bee that Mrs Gandhi is finding hard to swat—the danger being that the moment she does, the bee will sting harder.

—SUNIL SETHI in Paunar

LAW

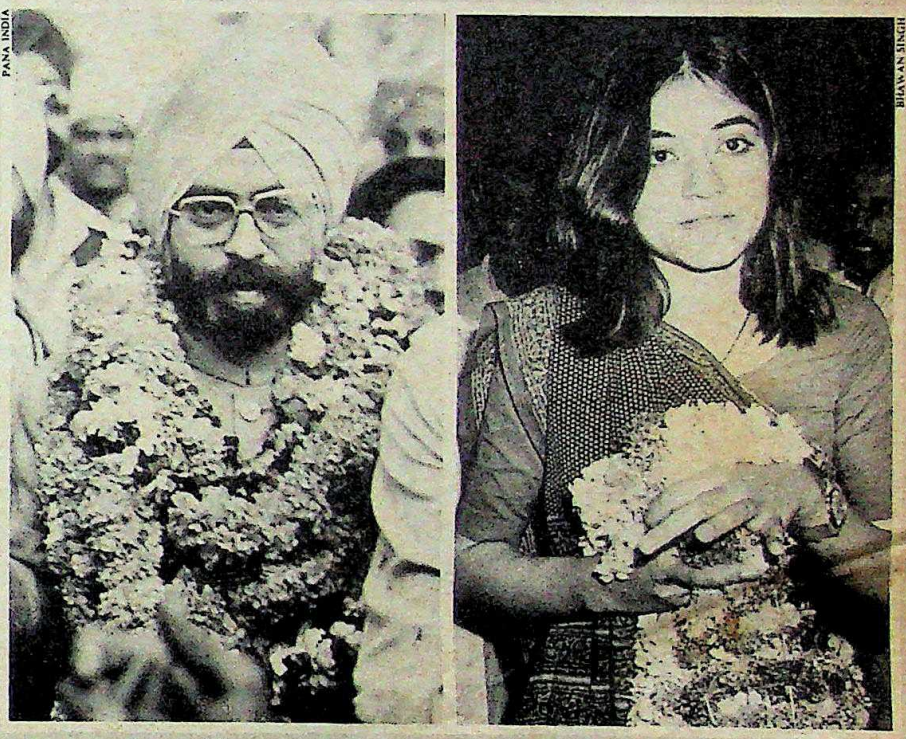
Friend Into Foe

THE CRUNCH was expected. It came the morning after Maneka returned home from Nagpur. Madanjit Singh, general manager of Pure Drinks, the Campa-Cola-producing company owned by Congress(I) MP Charanjit Singh rang her up to say that he was withholding her 22 trucks till she paid the company the sum of Rs 8 lakh.

According to a 1978 arrangement Rajdhani Traders—the trucking company of which Maneka is managing director—has been renting out its trucks to the Campa-Cola boss at a charge of Rs 200 a day. Although the arrangement was verbal (the first reference to it in writing is only dated on May 1,1979) it had worked efficiently according to Maneka till March this year when she was expelled from the prime minister's house. Since then, despite requests and reminders, Pure Drinks has simply not paid the monthly rental.

Next morning Maneka retaliated by slapping a civil suit against the company for recovery of Rs 3,54,000 owed to her. In another order in the Delhi High Court, giving the registration numbers of the vehicles, she asked the court to appoint a receiver to remove the trucks from the company's premises. Accusing Pure Drinks of being a "one-man show" Maneka also alleged that "the defendant (Charanjit Singh) has no liquidity, is on the verge of liquidation, is under heavy debts and the non-payment is also on account of political pressure". In fact, she claimed that his company's "indebtedness to the banks alone is over Rs 15 crore besides its indebtedness to the public and the Government."

While no comment was forthcoming from Pure Drinks—its General Manager Madanjit Singh shied away from meeting INDIA TODAY—Maneka seemed geared for the attack. Claiming that squeeze was motivated politically, she snapped: "Who does Charanjit Singh think he's


PANA INDIA

BHAWAN SINGH

Singh and Maneka: from bouquets to brickbats

fighting—a midget? I'll take him through every court in the land." According to her the Rs 8 lakh Pure Drinks is demanding is for the special shelving system attached to soft drink trucks—shelvings that don't belong to her and were fitted by Pure Drinks themselves. As far as her company's service was concerned, it only consisted of providing the chassis and three mechanics to maintain the vehicles. Pure Drinks undertook fitting the trucks with the shelving and changing it.

Financial Distress: Furthermore, Maneka alleges that non-payment of rental by Pure Drinks prevents her from repaying her bank loan at the rate of Rs 1 lakh a month, thereby threatening her company's closure which she describes as "a hand-to-mouth operation."

Rajdhani Traders which was started in 1978 by Sanjay Gandhi in place of Maruti Technical Services—whose assets of about Rs 10 lakh were ploughed into buying trucks—started with four vehicles. Since then, it has increased its fleet to 22, through bank borrowings. Maneka who claims she has no business acumen and only began to attend the Rajdhani office recently is willing for anyone to come and check her company's records. Determined to fight the pressure, she says she knows how to handle Charanjit Singh. He is, after all, an old debtor. Earlier, Maneka had claimed that one reason why her mother's publication *Surya* had to close down was because of unpaid bills worth Rs 1,37,000 by Pure Drinks.

On May 25 the Delhi High Court ruled in favour of Maneka, ordering Pure Drinks to pay within three days hire charges on 22 trucks for the months of March and April. While the court ordered the company to pay hire charges of Rs 200 per day on each truck for each subsequent month, Pure Drinks has been permitted to keep the Rs 1,69,600 they claim to have overpaid.

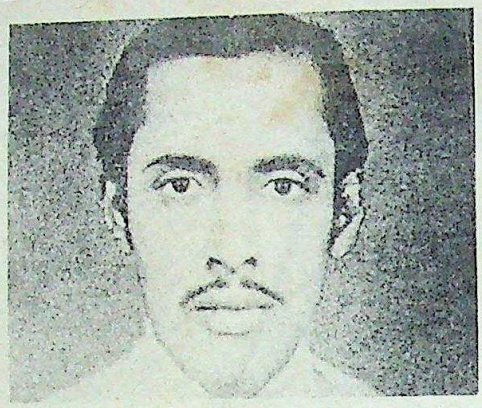
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BIHAR

Murdered For Asking

IT DOES not pay to be very inquisitive in a place like the Dhanbad coalfields of Bihar. This message was borne home rather forcefully when the mangled, dead body of S.D. Das—a young audit assistant from Calcutta—was found near the railway tracks in the Bhauli area of Dhanbad. Das's only fault was that he had the audacity to insist on the physical verification of cash accounts of one of the areas of the Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) and expressed doubts about certain documents involving contractors. The macabre end of Das's life has once again underscored the strength of the so-called Dhanbad mafia. The murder mystery remains unsolved.



Das: macabre end

In the wake of this tragedy, all chartered accountant firms including the one that Das represented have snapped ties with BCCL. BCCL's representatives have been frantically trying to prove their company's innocence in the grisly murder. But whatever the truth of the matter, observers here feel that the incident has cast an ugly shadow on BCCL—which is increasingly being charged with promoting mafia-type activities.

Connivance: It is not without reason that the BCCL has earned its nickname: *Bara Coela Chor Limited*. Rampant corruption within the organisation is a well-known fact (INDIA TODAY, February 1–15, 1978). "They are destroying the economy of the nation. One cannot describe the corruption and loot in the BCCL," says a senior executive magistrate. But what is perhaps even more frightening is that officials at BCCL have started to act in connivance with the traditional mafia-type elements who have been causing havoc in the coalfield areas for the last 10 years.

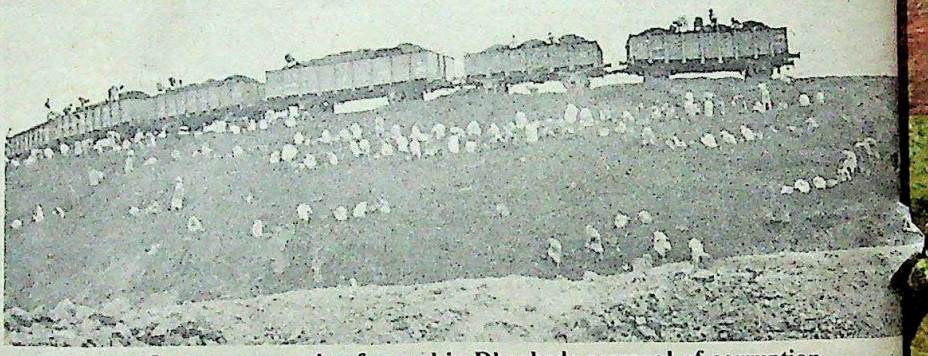
"Anybody who dare expose the corruption might meet Das's fate," says Anand Mohan, a Mazdoor Sabha national executive member, underlining the stranglehold of the corrupt elements within BCCL, who, he alleges, combine with political bosses and hired musclemen to make up Dhanbad's coalfield mafia. The three allegedly work in tandem and rule the roost in Dhanbad. The local administration has no choice but to obey them. Those who dare defy are quickly shunted out, or simply put into oblivion.

Adding fuel to the fire is the increasing militancy of the unions operating in the coalfields—who are wedded to Marxist-Leninist ideas. Special mention is made of K. Roy, an MP of Marxist orientation whose trade union—Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union (BCKU)—is known for its no-nonsense tactics. Sources point out that the group led by Roy is collaborating with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha to start a movement with Dhanbad as the centre. Funds are being collected by these militant groups in the same manner as the mafia kings. The sale of coal in one certain area was stopped for a month last March because Jharkhand Mukti Morcha workers were demanding Rs 150 from each coal-laden truck. The scenario was repeated in another area Mahuda when young men were found to be demanding Rs 150 per tonne of coal.

Imposters: BCCL—one of the subsidiaries of Coal India Ltd—has 87 working mines spread over 12 areas and employs 1.7 lakh workers. According to sources here, there are over 5,000 imposters employed by colliery level officials to protect their own vested interests. Even a senior level executive at BCCL admitted that musclemen had been hired in the beginning to protect the interest of the company, but no more.

Efforts to streamline operations within the BCCL have often met with stiff resistance in the past. Says BCCL spokesman R.N. Dwivedi: "Since 8 per cent of the contract work has been abolished and departmentalised, the mafia kings who thrived have turned desperate. There has been abnormal rise in dacoity cases in the collieries." Although many arrests have been made by the police, those familiar with Dhanbad like former deputy commissioner T. Nand Kumar allege that these are second and third level workers, while mafia kings are happily out of the dragnet. "They can never be booked as they have connections in Delhi and Patna," confides a police official. BCCL officials on the other hand say that since November last year company had prepared and submitted to the police a list of over 1,550 undesirable elements including some political bosses operating in the coalfields.

The history of the Dhanbad coalfields is stained in blood—of the human variety. Politically motivated murders, extor-



A.M. KISHAN

Looters scavenging for coal in Dhanbad: cesspool of corruption

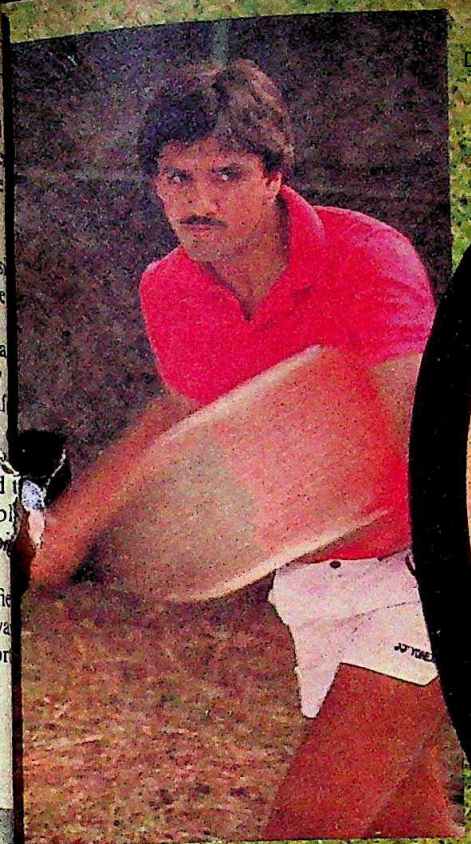
trade union rivalries and the exploitation of the poor miners have become an inalienable part of its culture. The bloody era appeared to have dawned on Dhanbad in late '77 with the coldblooded killing of B.P. Sinha, the towering INTUC leader who institutionalised mafia-style activities through hired lumpens from north Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. After his demise, these lumpens split into factions and emerged as leaders in their own right.

The strength of these mafia kings can be gauged from the fact that the downfall of former chief minister Karpoori Thakur—who had ordered a crackdown on trade union leaders in early '79—may have been triggered by one of them, Urmila Singh. The subsequent, comparative calm in Dhanbad can be attributed to two factors: demarcation of areas of operation and change of loyalties.

Cooperatives: In an attempt to break the vice-like grip of the mafia the BCCL management has helped set up four cooperatives of ex-servicemen, and provided them with 400 trucks. Furthermore, 132 contracts worth Rs 100 crore have been abolished in the past six months. But sources close

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pany point out that even cooperative rators have started succumbing to the dious designs of the Dhanbad mafia.

The management denies allegations of ruption. I.B. Pandey, deputy personnel nager and president of the Coalmines cers' Association asserted that most of officers were falsely implicated in recent ruption cases since only four or five were eventually indicted. B.S. Murthy, director finance, also spoke in the same vein. Officials at BCCL argue that critics levelling charges should point out names instead of maligning the entire community.

But the company's record is dismal on virtually all fronts. Although BCCL has spent over Rs 30 crore on housing, only 30 per cent of its workers have proper shelter. The rest live in filthy shanty towns.

The dimension of BCCL's and the Dhanbad coalfields' problems is truly mind-boggling. Even the most draconian measures by the management can only make a feeble dent on the Dhanbad mafia. If the Centre decides to tackle the cesspool of corruption that is Dhanbad, it had better go there with a well-stocked arsenal. —FARZAND AHMED

PUNJAB

Hostel Hostility

THE LARGE African student community in Chandigarh is currently trigger tense following clashes between Kenyan and Nigerian students. The north Indian town has the largest number of African students in the country and the trouble erupted last fortnight when a few Kenyan youths went to the houses of some Nigerians to talk to Kenyan girls who were 'living' with them. The Nigerians resisted what they saw as an intrusion into their privacy and the spark ignited.

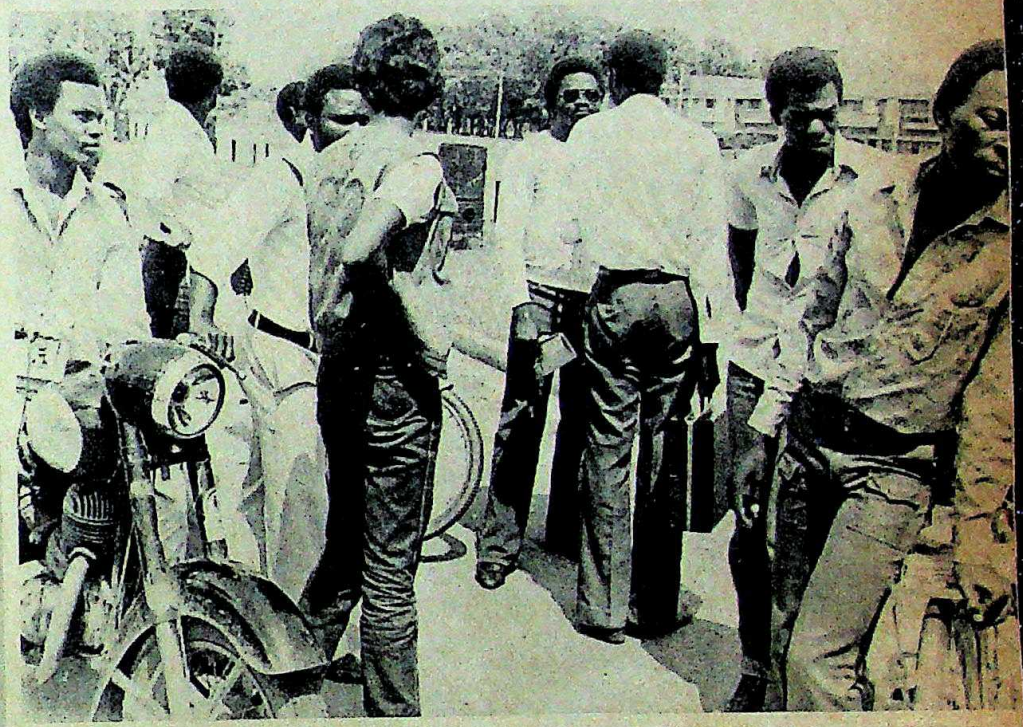
The Kenyans stormed the Nigerians' houses, breaking open doors, smashing up furniture and injuring quite a few Nigerians. The latter lost no time in launching a counter-attack and a battle ensued in which knives and sticks were freely used. Over 50 students were injured out of the 200 involved and the police—which earlier reportedly stood by amused and watched the fight—arrested 50 Kenyans and 47 Nigerians.

Pictures: The storm clouds had started gathering a few months earlier when, the Kenyans allege, Nigerians started enticing their girls away. Said J. Orina Momanyi, president of the Kenyan Students Association: "The Nigerians got a young Kenyan girl drunk and made her strip. Pictures of her in the nude were circulated. The police were informed and they did nothing about it. The Nigerians also issued a seven-page pamphlet using uncouth language against our country, our leaders and our women."

No one, however, has actually seen the 'nude' pictures and Nigerian Students Association President Olaide Hakeem Olayiwola denied that such pictures were in circulation. He adds that "some Kenyan girls liked the Nigerian boys" and says that "our boys are certainly more chivalrous and not as the Kenyans or the press have made them out to be".

Vijaye Beeharry, an economics student and president of the Foreign Students Federation also has not seen any 'nude' pictures but admits that the Kenyan boys did not like their girls to mix with the Nigerians. "We had held meetings and asked everybody to take a mature view," he asserts, but obviously this did not work, and Beeharry spent most of his time running around trying to get the Africans released so that they could appear for their exams.

He and other peacemakers were helped in this by Rachhpal Malhotra, director, Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development. Says Beeharry: "Nobody cared to listen to us and the police were bent on teaching us a lesson." Malhotra got in touch with Foreign Secretary M.K. Rasgotra. Two senior Kenyan and Nigerian diplomats soon arrived in Chandigarh, and the boys were bailed out on May 13, but many had missed their exams. Punjab University Vice-Chancellor R.C. Paul has, however, refused the students a special examination.



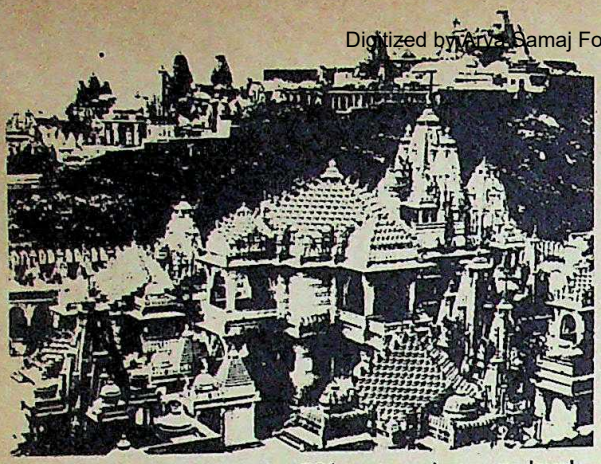
Kenyan and Nigerian students after their release from jail: trigger tense

Discrimination: The trouble has brought out the isolation that the Africans feel they live in. Said 25-year-old Okue: "The Indians do not like us." Dougles is more bitter: "We are called *habshis*. Imagine a man my size being humiliated by kids. But we tolerate it because we are outsiders." Concludes 20-year-old Charles: "This social oppression is very distressing."

The Africans are sore about the discrimination. Beeharry, whose forefathers had migrated to Mauritius from Bihar in the 19th century, affirms: "The police and the landlords fleece us. We pay double the rent and can be thrown out without any notice. Our pleas for hostel accommodation fall on deaf ears." The young African sums up the predicament despairingly: "We thought Africa and India, with their struggle against colonialism, had much in common. But a nigger is a nigger, whether in Europe, in the US or in India." —GOBIND THUKRAL

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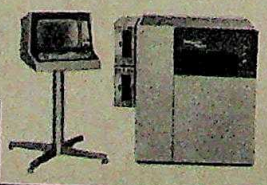
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JARAT

icence To Loot

CONSTRUCTION activity has nearly ground to a halt, land prices and rents have sky-rocketed and housing has become scarce in cities like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat, Rajkot, Bhavnagar d Jamnagar. The reason: Chief Minister dhavsinh Solanki is sitting over 8,319 istruction permit applications. Permits e been held up not only for private using but for cooperative housing so-ties, housing for weaker sections and dustrial units.

The Solanki Ministry stopped issuing objection certificates (NOC's) for con-uction in September 1980. Said Solanki: here is no question of issuing them as we having a new look the Urban Land iling Act (ULCA)." ith construction at standstill a severe using shortage has sen. Consequently, d prices have shot y over 300 per in Ahmedabad. r example, land in wntown Ashram ad which used to st Rs 1,700 a sq tre in 1980, now sts Rs 4,000. In aranpura, a suburb, d which sold for Rs 0 a sq metre in 1980, w costs Rs 1,200.

In the one year tween June 1979 d June 1980, the te Government re-ved 3,188 applications for weaker section using schemes. Out of these, 801 schemes 88,595 houses were sanctioned, 491 were cted and 1,896 were kept pending. Out of other 35,378 applications for cooperative using, industrial units and other nstructions, only 16,407 were sanctioned. many as 12,548 were rejected and 6,423 re kept pending. Among these, about 00 applications were solely for operative housing societies of around 20,500 houses.

Apart from land prices, flat prices have o sky-rocketed. In Vijaynagar, a three-om flat which used to rent for Rs 400 in 80, now fetches over Rs 800. The same uation prevails in most outlying areas like nbawadi, Paldi, Shahibaug, Navrangpura and Naranpura. Says an estate developer: "By not granting NOC's, the Government is only encouraging corruption. If flats cost more, it is because estate developers have to pay government employees at various stages to get papers cleared."

Illegal Structures: According to government estimates, there are about 450 illegal constructions without NOC's around Ahmedabad. Ironically, land organisers who are shy of disclosing estimates of illegal buildings, put the figure at around 4,000.

Even this is probably a conservative estimate. Thousands of illegal constructions have sprung up on the periphery of Ahmedabad city like Naroda, Narol, Vatva, Shaijpur Bhoga, Meghaninagar, Ghatlodia, Memnagar, Sola and Dani Limda. Admits bhai Patel, talati of Dani Limda: "Nearly 500 illegal constructions had sprouted in the village in recent months, but not one of them had been demolished by the Government."

Land Reforms Secretary, T.D. Soyantar, defends the Government's record: "The Government intends to take severe action againt such defaulters. Action has already been initiated in a few cases where fines have been imposed."

Enriching Speculators: While the Government mouths pious intentions, the non-availability of NOC's has delighted estate developers and contractors. The buildings they constructed with permission secured before September 1980 have turned out to be gold mines. With a crying shortage of built-up space, there is no shortage of buyers even at today's prices. As Solanki sits on the applications, land speculators are getting richer. Says Kiran Wadhwa, urban economist, Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research: "The ULCA instead of benefiting the poor has swelled the pockets of land speculators in Gujarat. Being organised, they have turned land into a sellers' market by creating a psychological scarcity, thanks to the Government policy of not issuing NOC's."



KANAN ZAVERI

Illegal construction in Ahmedabad: bonus for speculators

The majority of house-hunters in Ahmedabad who are businessmen, are ready to pay astronomical amounts for good houses. There is a flourishing 'black' operation, with unrecorded rent payments running as high as 60 per cent in Ahmedabad. Says an estate developer a builder: "I have constructed over 300 houses near Sola village without NOC's. What is the Government going to do? They cannot break down the residential societies. The Government has asked me to pay a fine of Rs 1.5 lakh. It is much cheaper to pay a fine than bribe government officials to get a NOC." Most builders voice similar sentiments. After the fines are paid the land and buildings are regularised.

Enquiries reveal that the Government is making little effort to prevent illegal building. Said a shopkeeper in Naroda: "Most of the shops and houses constructed here in the last two years are illegal constructions. The government officials who come to check such constructions once in a while take notes and go away. Nothing happens." Adds Manu-based in Ahmedabad: "By not issuing NOC's, the Solanki Government has helped us to get rich. We are making money as never before."

Solanki, who waxes eloquent over the ULCA which he describes as one of the most progressive legislations, has done practically nothing to support his claims that Gujarat is keen to implement it. The state has an estimated surplus of 49,031 hectares of land. Out of that, the Solanki Government has taken over a mere 21.9 hectares for weaker section housing. In Baroda, Surat, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar, no land has been acquired which casts doubt on the Government's political will to execute the sensitive social legislation. Solanki is vague about the review of the ULCA but even if the Government is serious it has not come up with any changes

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or decisions on the act after studying it for 19 months.

No Excuse: Asks Laxmidas Dani, executive director of the Gujarat Institute of Housing and Estate Developers: "How can the state Government not issue NOCs for so many months saying that it is reviewing the ULCA? The states are supposed to implement the act on guidelines from the Centre." Said Soyantar: "The Government seriously wants to acquire land for housing the needy. Vested interests like estate developers were unleashing propaganda against the Government as they were against government housing for the poor."

The state Government is presently veering towards the idea of only allowing public bodies to construct houses. Bodies like the Gujarat Housing Board, Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority, Slum Clearance Board and the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation build an average of 4,500 houses a year in Ahmedabad. But granting permission only to them will aggravate the situation as the growing city nee 20,000 houses a year. To reach thi NOCS will have to be given to private who are planning to construct cooperatives.

Says an optimistic estate dev "The Government will have to proc okay our applications sooner or Otherwise, people who suffer due to adequate housing are certain to reac these days."

—RAMESH

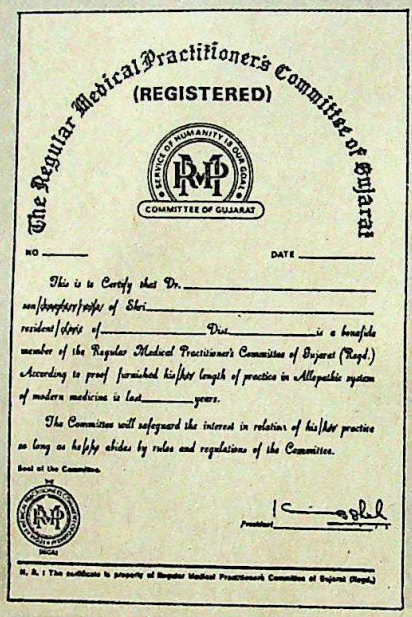
CRIME

Quick Quacks

TWENTY-five year-old Shaikh Ismail Kasam of Mazdar village in Banaskantha district of Gujarat has been practicing medicine since he was 18. He calls himself a "doctor" with a R.M.P. certificate which normally means registered medical practitioner. But, in his case the abbreviation actually stands for regular medical practitioner which in no way authorises him to practice medicine. Kasam has studied only till the fourth standard and his school certificate makes a pertinent remark: he never used to attend classes.

Last fortnight, the police led by Inspector Arjun Mistree, 36, of the anti-fraud section, crime branch, arrested 12 such "doctors" practicing in the crowded labour and industrial pockets of Ahmedabad. All of them, like Kasam, were using "R.M.P." certificates. Initially, the police did not realise the dimension of the racket. As investigations progressed, they discovered that 800 such quacks were practicing in the rural areas of Gujarat on the basis of a certificate issued by an Ahmedabad-based body, Regular Medical Practitioners' Committee of Gujarat. The crackdown on the quacks came about after Ashok Bhatt, a Bharatiya Janata Party MLA, told the state Assembly early this year that scores of quacks were practicing medicine using these certificates as a cover. The Health Minister, Manoharsinh Jadeja, then asked the Ahmedabad police to investigate the fraud.

Registered Body: The certificate issued by the committee says that the holder who is a doctor has been practicing the allopathic system of medicine. The arrested "doctors" in statements to the police have said that "Dr" Kirteekant Shah, 33, president of the committee, had assured them that they could safely practice medicine on the basis of his certificates since the committee was a registered body. Shah's committee is registered under the Companies Act and not under the Gujarat Medical Practitioners' Act. But when Shah's certificate is framed and hung in a clinic in a remote village where most people do not know English, it is a virtual guarantee for a lucrative medical practice. The police found out that the arrested "doctors" in Ahmedabad had proudly displayed these certificates in their clinics.


The Regular Medical Practitioners Committee of Gujarat
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SERVICE OF HUMANITY IS OUR GOAL
COMMITTEE OF GUJARAT
NO _____ DATE _____
This is to Certify that Dr. _____
son/daughter/wife of Shri _____
resident/dept. of _____ Dist. _____ is a bonafide member of the Regular Medical Practitioner's Committee of Gujarat (Regd.) According to proof furnished his/her length of practice in Allopathic system of modern medicine is last _____ years.
The Committee will safeguard the interest in relation of his/her practice as long as he/she abides by rules and regulations of the Committee.
Seal of the Committee.
President
N. B. : The certificate is property of Regular Medical Practitioners Committee of Gujarat (Regd.)



The illegal certificate legitimising quacks (top) and Shah: unrepentant

Shah's background makes interesting reading. He has studied only up to ninth standard. According to the police Shah got the credentials certifying him a doctor from the Health and Social Information Council of India at Jaipur. He was inspired by the tricks of quacks operating in Rajasthan, came over to Gujarat and started an association called the Regular Medical Practitioners Committee. It was ostensibly supposed to protect the interests of barefoot doctors and enable them to get government recognition.

Certificate: The process of getting a "R.M.P." certificate from Shah was simple: Each applicant had to pay Rs 2 for it. Besides, he also had to complete "medical practitioner's refresher course". No lectures were ever held. The syllabus consisted of five thin booklets written by Shah. Exam fees were Rs 350. The question papers asked only simple questions like give the meanings of abortion, anaemia and asthma or write notes on the heart and lungs. The papers were corrected by schoolteachers. In the last four years, 800 applicants appeared for the exam. No one failed. Applicants who got certificates had to subsequently pay a yearly membership fee of Rs 10. If they did not, the certificate would be taken back. When asked how much money the committee had accumulated, Shah said that it had no funds. He has an impressive office at a busy commercial centre in Ahmedabad. Says an unrepentant Shah: "Why is the police making so much noise about my certificates? There are nearly 5,000 unqualified doctors in Gujarat."

Apart from the 12 arrests, the police have also recovered from Shah's office files the names of over 800 other quacks practicing in the remote, far flung areas of the state. Within a few weeks, the police hope to close in on all such quacks in the state but the cost to innocent lives will probably never be ascertained.

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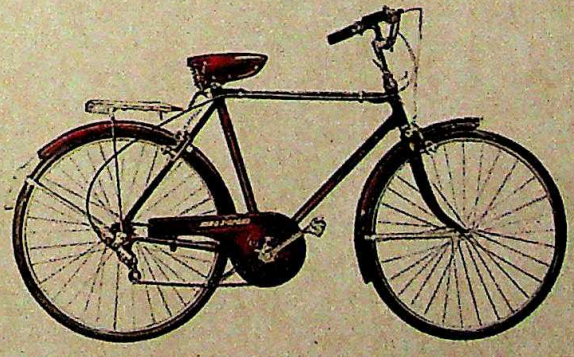
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MMU AND KASHMIR

he Resettlement Row

A CONTROVERSIAL resettlement bill, passed by both the houses of the state legislature in March this year, continues to draw much fire from the various opposition groups in this ntainous state. It has triggered a verit- war of words that might very easily uence the Assembly elections which ac- rding to many observers may be held in tober this year instead of June 1983 at the of the legislature's extended six-year- m. The issue also threatens to revive the old tussle between Centre and state, ich has been the hallmark of Kashmir.

person who is expected to n the most from this furore its present leader Sheikh dullah.

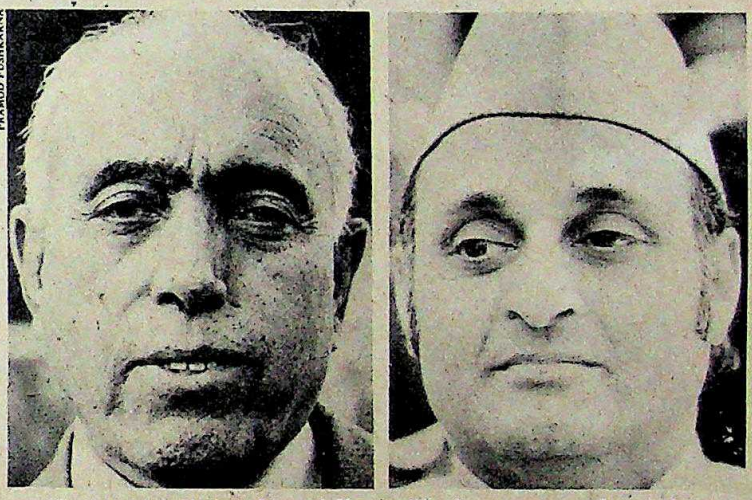
The bill, named "The mmu & Kashmir Grant of mit for Resettlement in (or manent Return to) the State 1982", was moved in the mbly on March 8, 1980 by mber of the ruling National ference (NC) party. A nine- ber select committee that died the bill included five NC mbers, two from the Janata ty and one each from the ngress(I) and the Jamaat-i- mi. But when the bill was ally passed, all the opposition ups were absent. With the eption of the Congress(I) and the small mi Action Committee, all the other jor parties have voiced their resentment no uncertain terms.

Critics: The Bharatiya Janata Party P) has threatened to launch an agitation inst the implementation of the bill calling "mischievous piece of legislation". Says Shahabuddin, Janata Party general retary: "The Act has eroded the sole mpetence of the Central Government to nt citizenship of India." Dr Karan Singh, rmer governor of the state and a staunch ic of the Sheikh, has labelled the bill as aught with dangerous implications".

Adding more fuel to the controversy is denial by the Union Government that Sheikh had consulted the Centre on this The state Government has issued a uttal stating that the chief minister self had written to the Union home ister in August 1981. Further, a copy of bill was sent to New Delhi in October year and the matter was discussed at length in New Delhi last January by the state law secretary and the advocate-general.

According to the bill "any person who was a state subject before 14 May, 1954 and has migrated to Pakistan after 1947 could be recommended for resettlement in the state on scrutiny by the state authorities". This includes the Kashmir residents of 'Azad' Kashmir—about one million people—who can claim to become the state's subjects at any time. Twenty-five seats in the present 76-member Assembly are left vacant for them. The bill specifically applies to some 1000-odd families originally from J & K who are settled in Pakistan.

Defence: The bill was recently submitted to the state Governor B.K. Nehru for his assent. The governor, feeling ill at ease amidst the mounting controversy, has now decided to seek the opinion of the attorney-general of India. Ruling party circles are not too pleased by the governor's step. "It is fully within the powers of the state legislature to pass this kind of a bill. The governor ought to have consulted the state's advocate-general," says A.G. Lone, an MLA. "These powers are vested in the state legislature alone," said M.K. Tikkoo, the state law minister.


PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Sheikh Abdullah (left) and Karan Singh: unanswered questions

The ruling NC party defends the enactment on the grounds that it is in pursuance of Section 6 of the J & K State Constitution and the 2nd proviso to Article 7 of the Union Constitution. Party stalwarts also cite the Delhi Agreement of 1948 wherein a specific provision was included for "ensuring the rights and privileges of citizenship to those Kashmiris who went to Pakistan in the wake of the disturbances of 1947 or in fear of them". The bill also requires prospective returnees to swear allegiance to the Indian Constitution. Says Sheikh Abdullah: "In any case many of them would not come back. Only 117 persons have returned since 1947. But we cannot deny them their rights. They are free to return to their home any time."

Different Interpretation: The critics of the bill see its provisions in a different light. Some fear it may encourage anti-national infiltrators. But the most vocal opponents are the three lakh non-Muslim refugees who migrated from West Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 and currently occupy huge chunks of evacuees' land in the Jammu border areas. They want the same privileges as the state subjects of J & K. An official spokesman however stated that "since they cannot be called permanent residents of the state, their fate can be decided by the Central Government alone." Says Rajya Sabha member Mohiuddin Shaal: "It is fallacious to say that it will affect them because the land allotted to them shall remain in their permanent possession."

The controversy has also found a prominent place in the state's media. *Navai Subah*, the NC mouthpiece, has in one of its editorials accused the opponents of the Sheikh of rousing communal sentiments in order to find a foothold in the state. Conversely, *Presager*, a Jammu periodical, alleges that "the Sheikh wants to divert the public attention and play on the religious sentiments of the masses".

The Constitution stipulates that in case the governor returns the bill for reconsideration, it be either dropped or passed again in the state legislature. In case of its new endorsement, the governor is then bound to grant assent to it.

The bill by itself raises some vital questions which have been left unanswered so far. In case it is implemented, whose authority—the state's or the Centre's—will carry weight in scrutinising a family or a person wanting to return? Some Kashmiris who are well settled in Pakistan might avail of this opportunity by coming to Kashmir—if they can get visas—disposing of their property and then giving the authorities the slip. Can the state accommodate an additional influx of people should the situation in Pakistan trigger off an exodus? And finally, will this not create new impediments in the way of the already strained state-Centre relationship?

The answers to these questions will largely hinge on what course the bill will take in the days to come.

—GHULAM NABI KHAYAL

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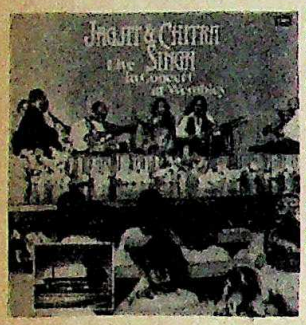
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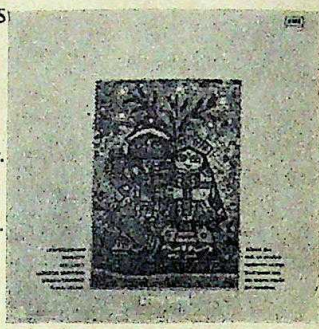
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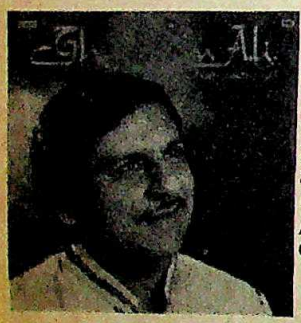
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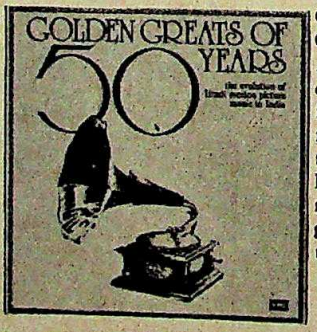
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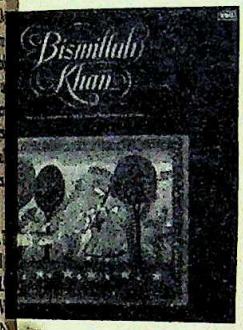
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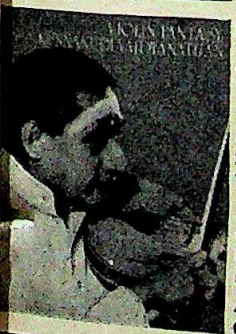


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PRESIDENT REAGAN

Losing Political Momentum



RONALD REAGAN, like his vanquished opponent Jimmy Carter, may wind up as a one-term President. Things look pretty bleak for him and the country. The latest public opinion polls show that Reagan's popular approval rating is lower than what Jimmy Carter had after he had completed two years in office and that Senator Kennedy could beat him. Popular opinion, however, is often fickle and subject to sudden shifts.

As things look now it is difficult to imagine that Reagan's popularity will rise in the polls. The President is steadily losing political momentum. On Capitol Hill, the Republicans and conservative Democrats who had rallied behind the presidential banner one year ago to give the administration swift and stunning victories on cutting government spending are now opposing Reagan's new budget initiatives. He is under attack from the political right, whose causes he had championed, for not fighting hard enough for the conservative agenda, and he is under bitter criticism from the liberals for adding to the economic woes of the needy and the underprivileged through cuts in welfare programmes.

But most of all it is the American middle class—the voting, taxpaying middle Americans who gave Reagan his overwhelming victory—that is chafing under the President's economic bit. Carter's defeat stemmed in part from his wishy-washy foreign policy, the disaster in Iran and the widely perceived loss of American geopolitical machismo, but his debacle was based in large measure on a sense of impending impoverishment among the middle class.

Interest Rates: Under Carter, the American dream—home-ownership by the common man and woman—dissipated because of sky-rocketing interest rates, spelling Carter's doom. The same interest rates spell disaster for Reagan. Because money continues to be so prohibitively expensive, most individuals cannot borrow in order to buy houses, businesses cannot spend, new construction is virtually at a standstill and venture capital for new and innovative technologies non-existent.

America is in the midst of its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the '30s. Unemployment has already reached 9.5 per cent with nearly 11 million Americans out of work. It is expected to climb even higher. Newspapers dwell on the plight of laid-off workers described by Kennedy as the "Ronald Reagan breadline" like Richard Cohen who recently lost his six-year-old job with the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. Cohen is an economics graduate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a Master's from Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public Administration. Five months and 175 job applications later he is still unemployed.

And inflation continues unabated at 9 per cent. A recent cartoon by Ed Fischer in the *Rochester Post Bulletin* shows two men feeding crumbs to ducks in a park. In the midst of the ducks is a man on his knees, begging like a dog, his mouth open. The caption reads: "The recession is worse than I thought." Another cartoon in the *Denver Post* shows a man sitting on a park bench feeding a flock of birds. A stork standing by itself and looking at the man is saying: "Thank you kindly, sir, but for the duration of this administration perhaps you should save that for yourself."

Economic Gloom: The cartoons, as they must, exaggerate. But they are surely symbolic of the general aura of economic gloom that enshrouds this country. "The recession must be here to sta observer noted wryly after listening to a commercial on the r is an advertisement on a local radio station for a moving co called Allied Van Lines. The speaker promises the listen there has been no real rise in prices charged by the compan customers over the last several years. "I should know," t says in the advertisement, "because I am an expert on inf The man then identifies himself. He is the renowned Samuelson who won the Nobel Prize for Economics.

Other symbols are equally painful to America's collectiv For a decade, industrial and trade unions have been Congress for protective trade barriers against imports. The constantly feared a Japanese economic blitzkrieg against A Unable to compete against Japan in the domestic auto market, the unions were able to persuade Reagan last armtwist the Japanese into "voluntarily" curbing auto to the United States. In an ironic, even bizarre twist, the Ja agreed to comply and then made America an offer it co resist—Japan would provide economic aid to the United both in terms of massive investments in plants and machi well as direct cash loans.

Japan also has an assistance programme under which agreed to supply relatively low-interest loans to American c need of urban rejuvenation. Lynchburg, a small, relatively o township in Virginia, became the first American city to apply direct multi-million loan to the Japanese Government. But hurts. This pains America's image of itself as the world's le industrial giant and often results in a tragi-comic rele vindictive energy. The newspapers carry reports of outbu anti-Japanese feeling.

SOME days ago an auto worker from Detroit, who ha forced into early retirement because of massive lay-offs automobile industry, decided to go for a ride in his truck. The first car he encountered on the highway happened Toyota. The sight of this Japanese automobile so enraged worker that he pulled out his hunting rifle and pumped shots into the rear of the Toyota and ran it off the road.

The apple-pie-and-motherhood institutions such a interest rates, home ownership, secure jobs, cheap domestic that are now on the economic endangered species list cont grow. Add to that list Braniff Airlines, an international which straddled with nearly $800 million in debts folded su on May 12. The 54-year-old company suspended all its emp

Facing serious potential disaster is the 50-year social s programme, a brain-child of Roosevelt and his New Deal always been considered the American Government's most cow. Emulated the world over, the programme operates a to-grave financial security network financed by compulsory s through pay-roll taxes. It pays out more than $10 billion a m more than 30 million beneficiaries in old age pensions, widow survivors' benefits, disability pensions and hospital b Payments are tied to cost-of-living increases, high inflation interest rates and the concomitant loss of jobs which have the social security tax base and are threatening to render the insolvent.

Popular Anger: Reagan wants to cut some $40 bil benefits in order to save the system—a move that has al older Americans for whom social security is often the sole so

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tenance, as well as a large segment of middle class wage earners o contribute 8 per cent of their monthly paychecks to d the programme. A national debate is now raging over whether system should be saved through programme cutbacks, through reases in pay-roll taxes or through cutting back on defence enditure and channelling the savings into social security. And agan and Reaganomics have become the lightning rods for ular anger over the death threat to the fiscally ailing social urity system.

Rural America too—the farmers who feed not only America much of the world—is in severe economic straits largely ause small and family farmers, as opposed to large corporate mers, are being squeezed to death by high interest rates. Spokesmen for the National Farmers Union use the word pression" to describe the crisis in rural America. Since the inning of 1982 about 1,100 farmers are being forced out of their ms every week because their inability to borrow at high interest es is compelling them to auction, sell or desert their farms. The rmers Home Administration—a source of government credit to rmers—has foreclosed on 22,000 farms during a one-month iod because their owners were unable to pay off their debts. s Minnesota farm- Allen Sanow. "It's t called foreclosure Minnesota any re, it is called a ced liquidation."

Swift Action: In aganite America all best-laid plans have awry. The Pre- t had promised and swift action reverse the tide of t he had described "decades of neglect sound economic licies". Economic racles, he argued, uld be achieved rough balanced bud- ts, lower tax rates, d drastic cutbacks government spending, and simplification of tax structure.

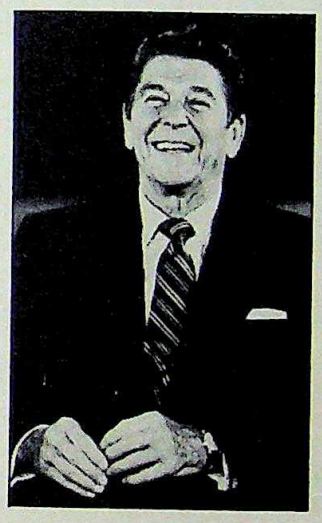
This was the essence of supply-side Reaganomics. But none it came to pass. Reagan's promised tax cuts were neither bold, r swift, nor timely, nor meaningful. For the average American e first dose of tax cuts were offset by inflation and higher pay-roll es for the social security system. Instead of "massive cuts" in budget, expenditures actually increased by 14 per cent over last Carter year. The larger $800 billion budget mostly aimed feeding the insatiable appetite of the defence establishment has ated an unprecedented deficit now projected at about 0 million.

Meanwhile, just the interest of the national debt alone is a opping $90 billion necessitating further government borrowing m financial institutions. But this borrowing simply adds an ditional amount to the national debt which must then be paid off further borrowing and the situation continues to snowball. here was no common sense approach here," one administration rce confided. "You cannot jack up defence spending to such rmous levels and cut taxes at the same time while hoping to lance the budget."

Financial Holes: The Reagan plan also included tax breaks for ge corporations. But there was a *quid pro quo*. In return for the tax breaks, corporate America would pressure the banks to bring interest rates down. But Reagan got suckered. The corporations took the tax breaks and the banks backed by the Federal Reserve Board refused to bring down interest rates. The result was that while smaller financial institutions like saving and loans associations folded or were forced to merge for lack of borrowers who could afford the high rates, the bigger banks, having all but wiped out their competition, thrived.

In the end Reaganomics was not what it professed to be but monetarism with a vengeance—the age-old Keynesian art of fighting a "heated up" economy or inflation by the deliberate creation of recession and unemployment. Cutting back government spending on welfare programmes and deliberate high interest rates have combined to curtail not so much inflation as jobs, housing, autos, lumbering, steel, and construction.

Compounding the problem of runaway defence expenditures are massive government subsidies and tax breaks to a few big businesses that amount to about $48 billion in the administration's current budget. According to a recently published study by tax analysts, leading corporations paid little or no taxes despite windfall earnings. This list includes the Monsanto Company with domestic earnings of $204 million in 1981, the Chase Manhattan Bank with domestic earnings of $207 million, and the Squibb Corporation with $204 million. The income tax on Exxon amounted to a mere 1.3 per cent of domestic earnings of $2.5 billion.



% of people who have real doubts about Reagans ability to:

	MAR. '82	DEC. '81	SEP. '81
Lead the nation	51	43	44
Deal with the economy...	28	22	20
...and foreign afairs	31	22	23

RESULTS FROM A TIME-YANKELOVICH SURVEY

Scandals: Reagan's current unpopularity stems not just from economic decline but from the style of his administration. Nobody doubts Reagan's personal honesty and goodwill toward this country. But he is increasingly being viewed as a man who is neither the jack nor the master of the various trades of governance. His administration has its share of scandals. His top two advisers, former national security adviser Richard Allen and CIA chief Bill Casey both have been charged with financial improprieties.

His close personal friend Attorney-General William French Smith, the chief law enforcement officer of the country, has taken questionable cash payments from his former company as well as improper tax deductions. Reagan's Labour Secretary Raymond Donovan is under investigation on charges that the company he formerly headed made pay-offs to the Mob.

Reagan seems unruffled by these storms. He still likes to appear before TV cameras riding his horse on his luxurious ranch. Americans have begun to resent this image. They see Reagan as the rich man's President. His wife, Nancy, does little to discourage this view with her purchases of thousand-dollar evening gowns, of expensive jewellery and crockery for the White House.

Small wonder, then, that the *Milwaukee Journal* carried a cartoon showing Nancy Reagan posing in a swank evening dress worth thousands of dollars and next to her a decrepit woman holding the hand of a hungry child saying: "This original donated by Ronald Reagan." The woman is wearing a wooden barrel.

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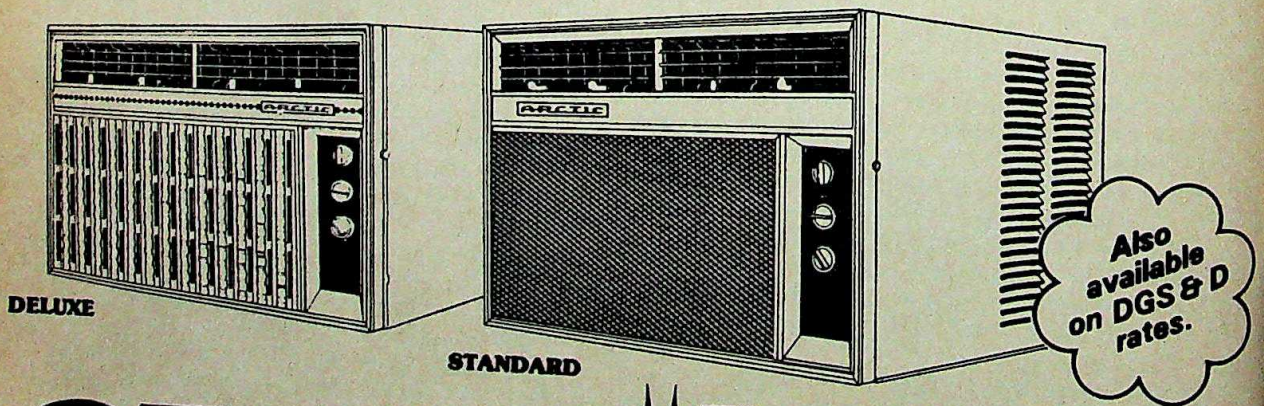
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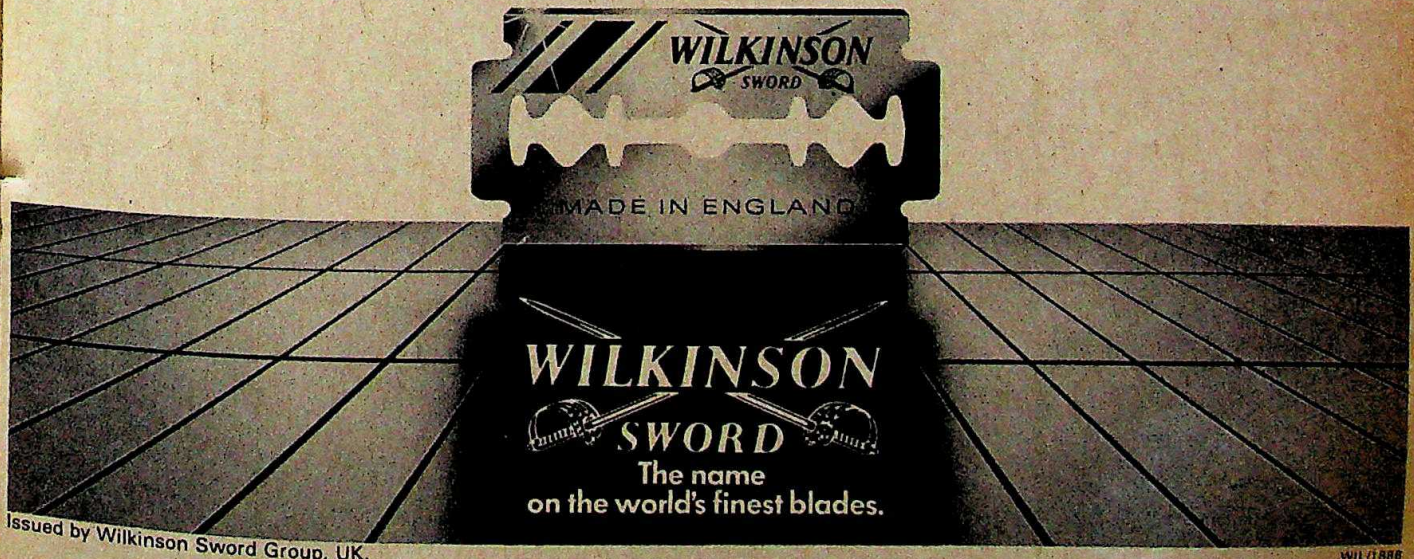
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So when you buy blades and shaving systems made by Wiltech (Savage, Wiltedge or Wilman II) you can be sure that they have been made to the highest possible quality standards — Wilkinson Sword standards.



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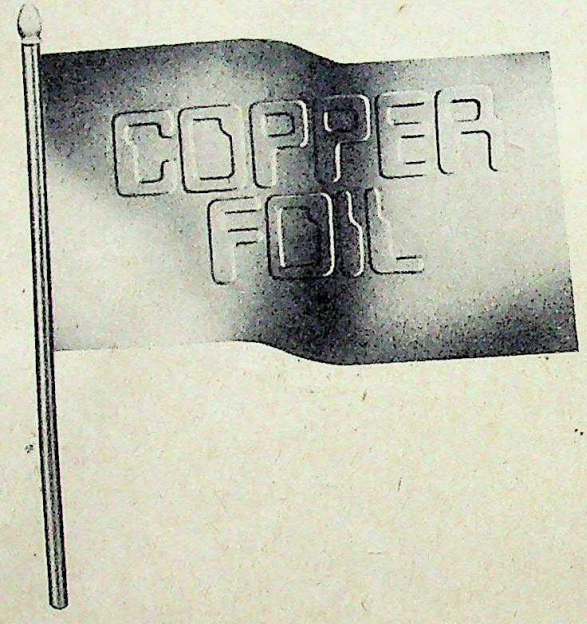
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Issue Opens on 9th June, 1982

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Partap Copper—pulsed for growth

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PAKISTAN

Back To The Burkha?

CAREER women in Pakistan face an uncertain future as that Muslim country continues its relentless 'Islamisation' drive. If Pakistan's Federal Shariat (Islamic) Court accepts a recent petition challenging the appointment of women to judicial posts then all the lady magistrates and judges would be retired from service.

The main point of contention in the case filed by a lawyer and former student leader, Ansar Burney, is that lady magistrates and judges are working in courts without observing 'purdah' and discharging the functions of Qazis'. This, according to Burney, was against the injunctions of Islam and against the spirit of the Constitution of Pakistan which says "the state shall exercise its powers within the limits described by the almighty Allah".

The petition has come in the wake of a nation-wide controversy sparked off by a religious scholar, Dr Asrar Ahmed, who charged in a TV programme that women were responsible for the increase in sex crimes and therefore should not be taken in Government jobs, and should be retired and sent home. Asrar's remark has stirred a hornet's nest among the educated and working women who hit back by demanding his removal from the Federal Council (Majlis-e-Shoora).



Dr Asrar Ahmed: defiant zealot

Resignation: A defiant Asrar, whose controversial views find as staunch a band of popular supporters as those who decry his views, made a dramatic announcement of his resignation from the Council last fortnight. According to him, the resignation has nothing to do with the demands of the women, but after having been associated with the Council for about eight months, he suddenly found it to be a political body". "The Council has become a nominated parliament instead of a consultative body. It is just wasting the nation's time," says Asrar, a doctor-turned-preacher who was once associated with the now defunct party Jamaat-e-Islami.

However, the general belief here is that Asrar resigned because he was opposed to the presence of women in the Council. He has repeatedly voiced his demand for the removal of women members from the Council maintaining that they had no role to play and should not even be consulted on administrative matters. The debate on the status of women in the Muslim society of Pakistan has acquired a new sense of urgency in the nation's media in the wake of this controversy.

Pakistani women also suffered another setback recently when President Zia-ul-Haq ruled that they would not be allowed to go abroad to participate in sports events. The President, however, made it clear that women would be allowed to form teams and play within the country "fully observing the restrictions imposed by our culture and civilisation". But, contrary to the President's ruling, girls were barred from participating in the recently concluded national games in Peshawar. Even foreign girls including Indians were not allowed to take part in the games. Commenting on Zia's statement, Naushaba, a young athlete from Karachi said that it was very disappointing and felt that it has left sportswomen in Pakistan in a quandary. Despite protests from hockey players and athletes, the Government appears determined to implement the ban.

Reassurance: Strictures on women extend to other fields as well. There has been a lot of delay in the setting up of women's universities in the provinces. The draft prepared by experts is presently under study at the Law Ministry. Even if it is accepted by the ministry, it has yet to be placed before the Cabinet for final approval. Women educationists feel that the draft may never get the official seal of approval. More so because the only lady secretary in the Government, Gulzar Bano, has gone on leave preparatory to retirement. She was the only top-level woman bureaucrat capable of pushing the draft.

Women in Pakistan are not very confident about the reassurance of Zia that working women will not be sent home, especially since the President's remarks were followed by a ban on women athletes from competing abroad. Interestingly enough, Asrar's controversial TV programme 'Al-Huda'—based on Islamic teachings—was banned in the wake of his remarks on women. TV bosses apparently succumbed to pressure from women's groups. In a touch of irony, two young women lawyers of Karachi—Begum G.M. Tamseel and Begum Tamseel Javed—have moved a civil court challenging the ban and seeking an injunction to continue the programme. The case continues.

Pakistani women anxiously await the final outcome of these cases. The decision of the Federal Shariat Court would be binding on Zia as well. If all the lady magistrates and judges are sent back home it is inevitable that women workers in other government departments are in for a rude shock.

—QUTUBUDDIN in Karachi

PIA airhostesses: an uncertain future for working women



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A unique sports villa
a traditional 'village' in spirit, bu

Report on Asia's greatest spectacle of sport...

Even before the Asiad opens in November, the sports village will have come alive, as over 5,000 sportsmen and officials start moving into its 853 independent houses.

The village, in all its beautifully landscaped splendour, is designed to offer its residents a complete 'home away from home'.

Laid out like a village, built like a city.

Laid out over a sprawling 55.5 hectares, this sports village remains true to its name—a village. The houses cluster around 'community squares' joined by narrow stone-paved streets, free of motor traffic. The place offers the peace, the harmony of a village. It will be landscaped using several thousand trees, shrubs and creepers.

In substance, however, this village is a city—a self-contained unit with modern amenities. The latest facilities in every house, such as solar heaters. A mini-hospital. A massive dining hall for 2000. Restaurants and discotheques. A 58-metre tower, housing a roof-top viewing gallery, restaurant and water tank. Reception and administrative blocks.

Entertainment bonanza.

For the entertainment of the residents, an entire cultural centre is coming up. At its heart will be a 2500-seat auditorium —one of the best equipped in India.

Its high quality, multi-channel sound reinforcement system—specially designed by Philips—uses mixing consoles, reverberating units and time-delay units, making it highly flexible in its application. This makes the auditorium suitable for dance, drama, concert and other performances.

Ancient mystique.

Adding mystique and interest to this modern 'village' will be the rich history of the spot where it is located. For, in the 14th century, this was Siri, the second out of Delhi's 7 capitals—a splendid city built by Ala-ud-din Khilji. Today only some ruins remain, which are being imaginatively incorporated into the landscaping.

Elaborate sports facilities.

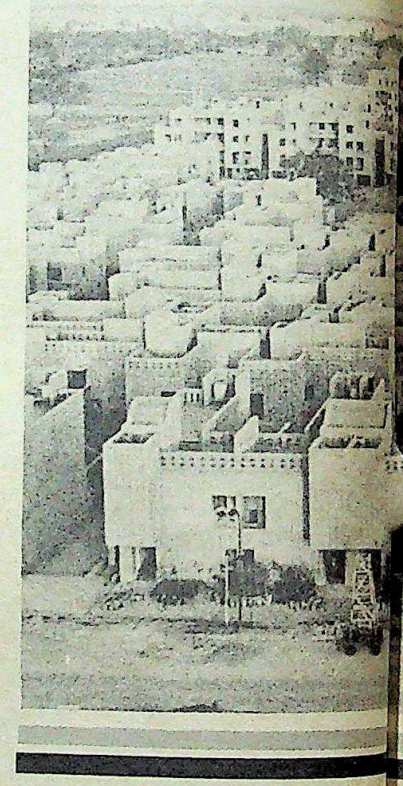
An integral part of this village are the elaborate sports facilities being prepared. Practice facilities for practically every sport, ranging from football to weightlifting, from athletics to tennis, will offer similar features as those offered by the stadia where the Asiad will be contested.

Thus, this will be more than just a residential village. Sportsmen living here will be able to practice hard, relax their bodies and recharge their spirits—all of which should make for grand performances upon the sports fields.

A remarkable facility for Delhi.

The construction of the sports village is part of a meticulously coordinated activity involving hundreds of specialist agencies.

After the Games, this will become one of Delhi's best planned colonies, with the cultural centre, the restaurant complexes and the playing fields becoming a remarkable set of facilities added to Delhi's landscape.



An honour to India.

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The Asiad. The largest spectacle of sport in Asia. Eagerly awaited, keenly contested, once every 4 years.

The IX Asiad is coming, and we are getting ready.



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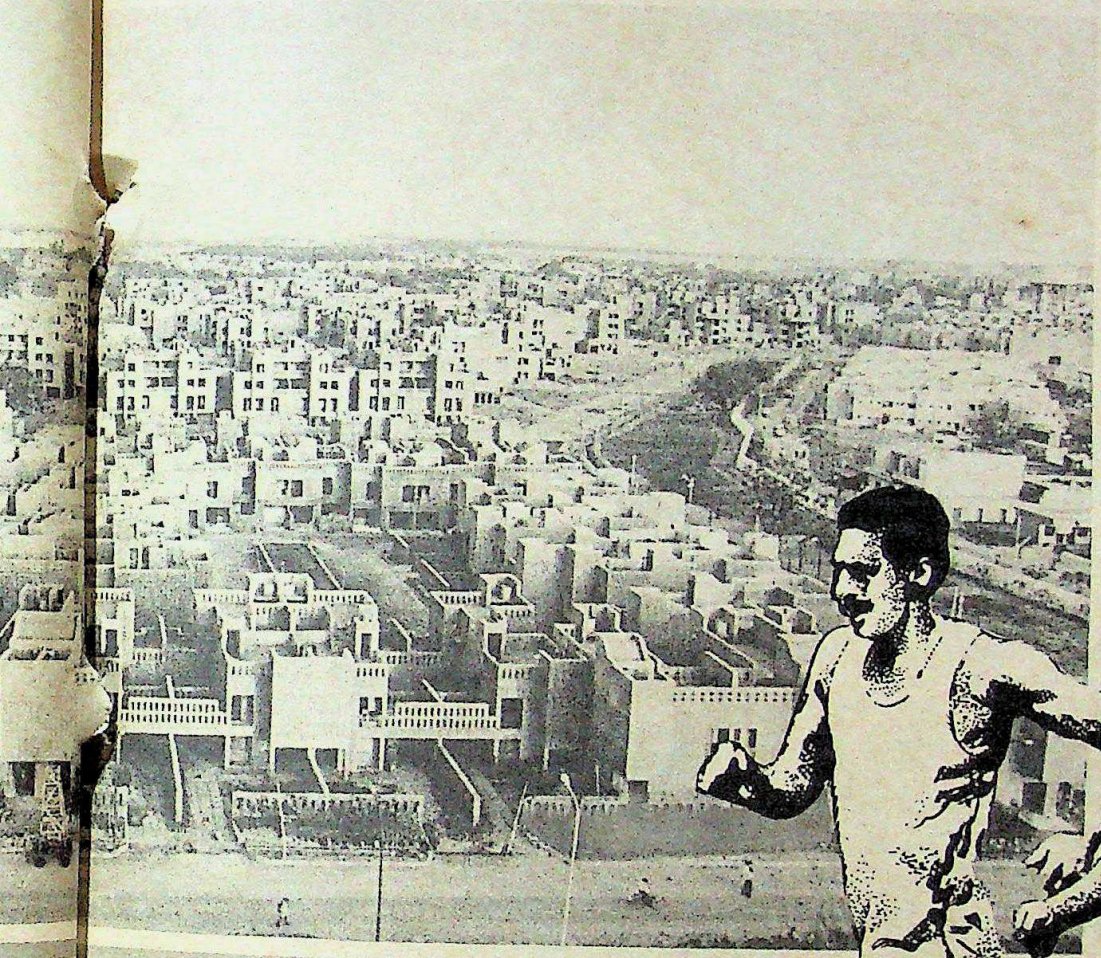
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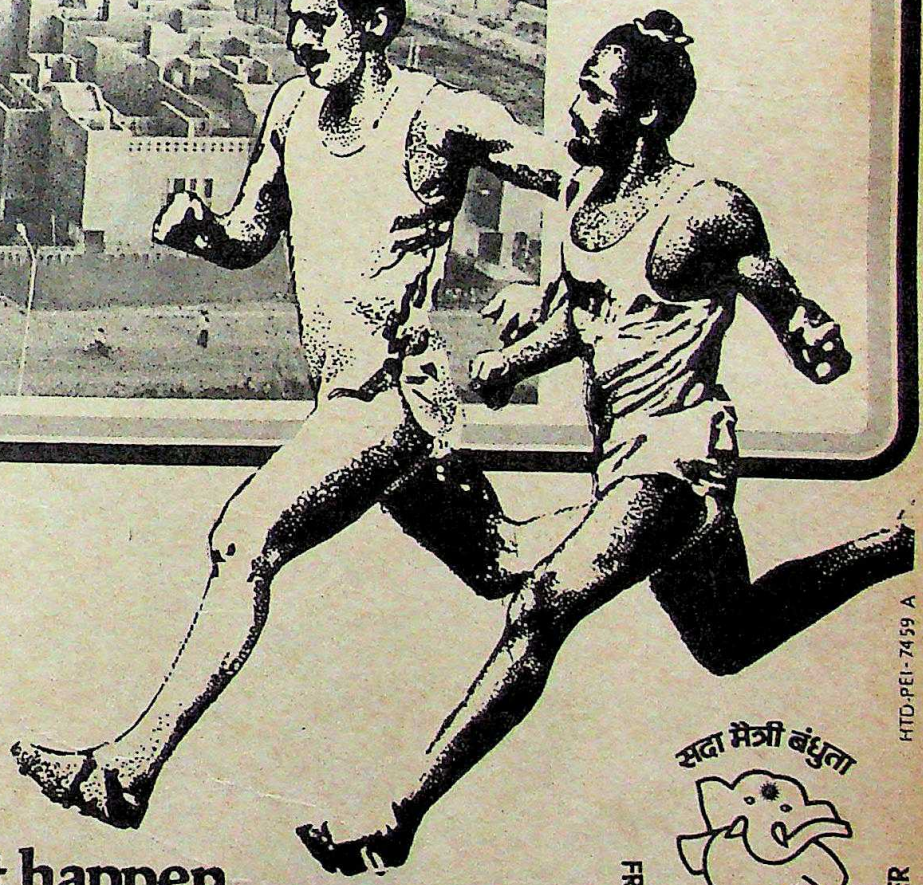
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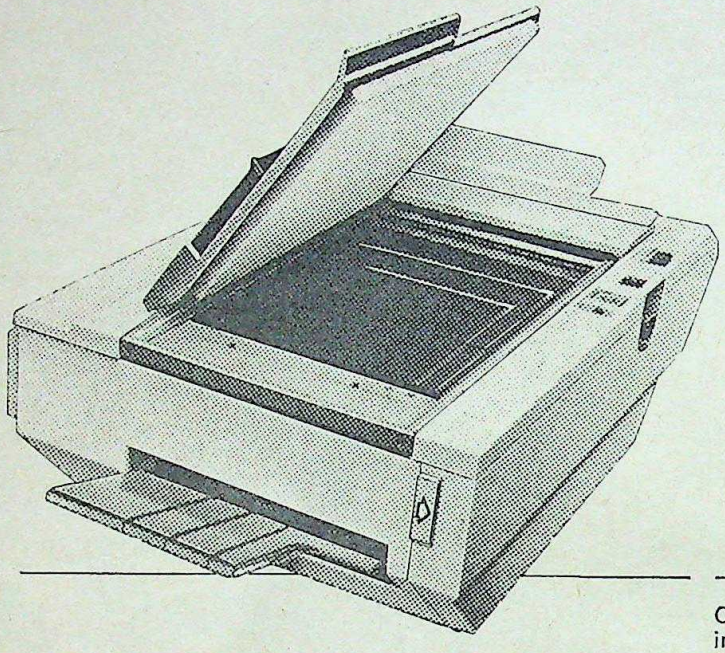
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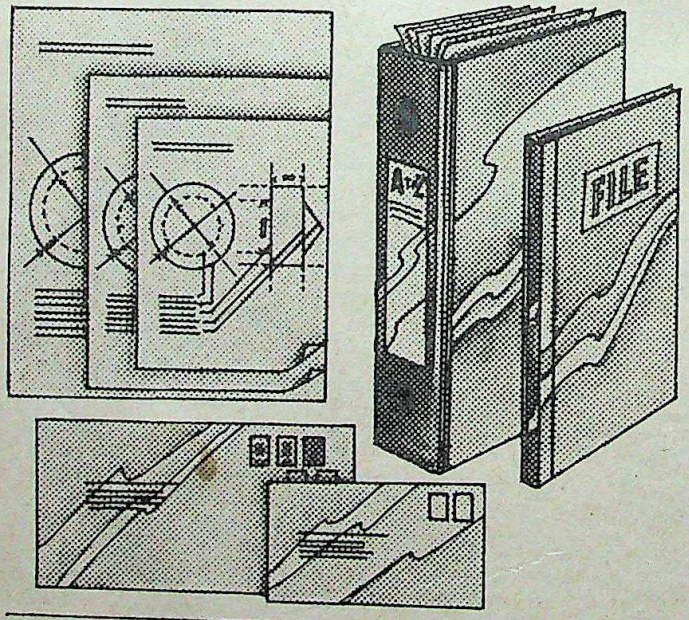


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INDIA AS AID-GIVER

BELIEVE it or not, but India has given out more than Rs 2,500 crore as aid and credits to over 60 developing countries in less than two decades. This aid record could, in relative terms, be even better than that of many far more affluent countries. They are supposed to give 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) as aid, but actually give an average of a little over 0.3 per cent. Many developed countries manage much less. In contrast, India's aid to other Third World countries averages 0.25 per cent of its GNP.

Much of this country's aid takes the form of trade-oriented loans; but roughly 10 per cent of the total has gone as outright grants. A further 35 per cent of the total has been given in the shape of technical assistance, most of it to the neighbouring countries. Some of the aid takes the shape of investment in joint ventures abroad and would not, therefore, strictly qualify as 'aid.' And a good bit of the trade-related loans are meant to facilitate Indian exports.

DDING UP LOSSES

THE ADVERTISING world seems headed for a major crisis: with some big newspapers deciding to stop credit to the vertising agencies and to ask instead for advance payments on all bookings, the agencies find themselves in a financial squeeze. At ast one of them is expected to close down very soon, and another reportedly closing its Delhi office. A number of others face major yments difficulties. A part of the problem is the increasing cost of vertising: TV ad rates have doubled, and radio rates have gone even more. Many newspapers have similarly hiked rates sharply. dustry insiders now fear a major collapse, like the one in the mid-70s.

E TROLLEYBUS TREND

HARAT Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) may soon tie up a deal with Italy's Ansaldo Impianti for the import, assembly and bsequent manufacture of electric trolleybuses. Trolleybuses are anned to be introduced first in Srinagar and then in Delhi and mbay. The Planning Commission estimates that as many as ,000 trolleybuses could be in operation by 1990.

The proposed deal between BHEL and Ansaldo envisages the tial import of 50 or 60 trolleybuses from Italy, each valued at ughly Rs 6 lakh. This will be followed by the import of mponents for assembly in India, and finally by full-scale anufacture. A couple of other international companies are also ing to get a toe-hold in a market that is seen as offering a bright ture. At the going rate of Rs 6 lakh per trolleybus, orders for ,000 buses would fetch Rs 600 crore in the next eight years.

LING THE WAY

THE REPEAT invitation to the international oil companies to come and prospect for oil in India's offshore areas may be layed—ironically enough—because global oil prices have started ing. This has suddenly changed the economics of oil exploration, d reduced the global oil giants' immediate interest in exploring oil anywhere and everywhere. But the Government is unde-red, and is thinking of offering the prized Godavari basin as bait. a further concession, it intends waiving the earlier condition that dia will have first rights on any oil that is found, thereby allowing oil exploring company to ship out a part of the oil for its global pply stream.

These were some of the conditions which the oil companies d insisted on during the first round of bids last year, but the vernment had refused to give in. In the event, only one company eventually signed up an exploration contract, though over 30 had shown a serious interest. Now the Government feels there may be no alternative to meeting the oil companies' demands to the extent possible. But the oil companies themselves are less keen now than before. A formal repeat invitation for bids may therefore have to be delayed till more propitious times arrive.

BACK TO FORWARD TRADING?

THE RECENT burst of speculation on the Bombay stock exchange may, ironically, result in the Government deciding to allow forward trading in shares once again. Forward trading (buying or selling against future delivery) had been banned over a decade ago in order to reduce speculation on the stock markets. But the ban has been observed only in the breach; and the technical subterfuges employed to get around the ban have prevented the Government from taking effective countermeasures. The feeling now is that it may be better to bring forward trading activity into the open so that an effective check can be kept on excessive and unhealthy speculation.

A committee, comprising the chairmen of the five leading stock exchanges, has recently gone into the subject, and its major recommendation is reported to be in favour of re-introducing forward trading. The other option before the Government is to extend the present 14-day settlement deadline for share transactions to 21 or 28 days.

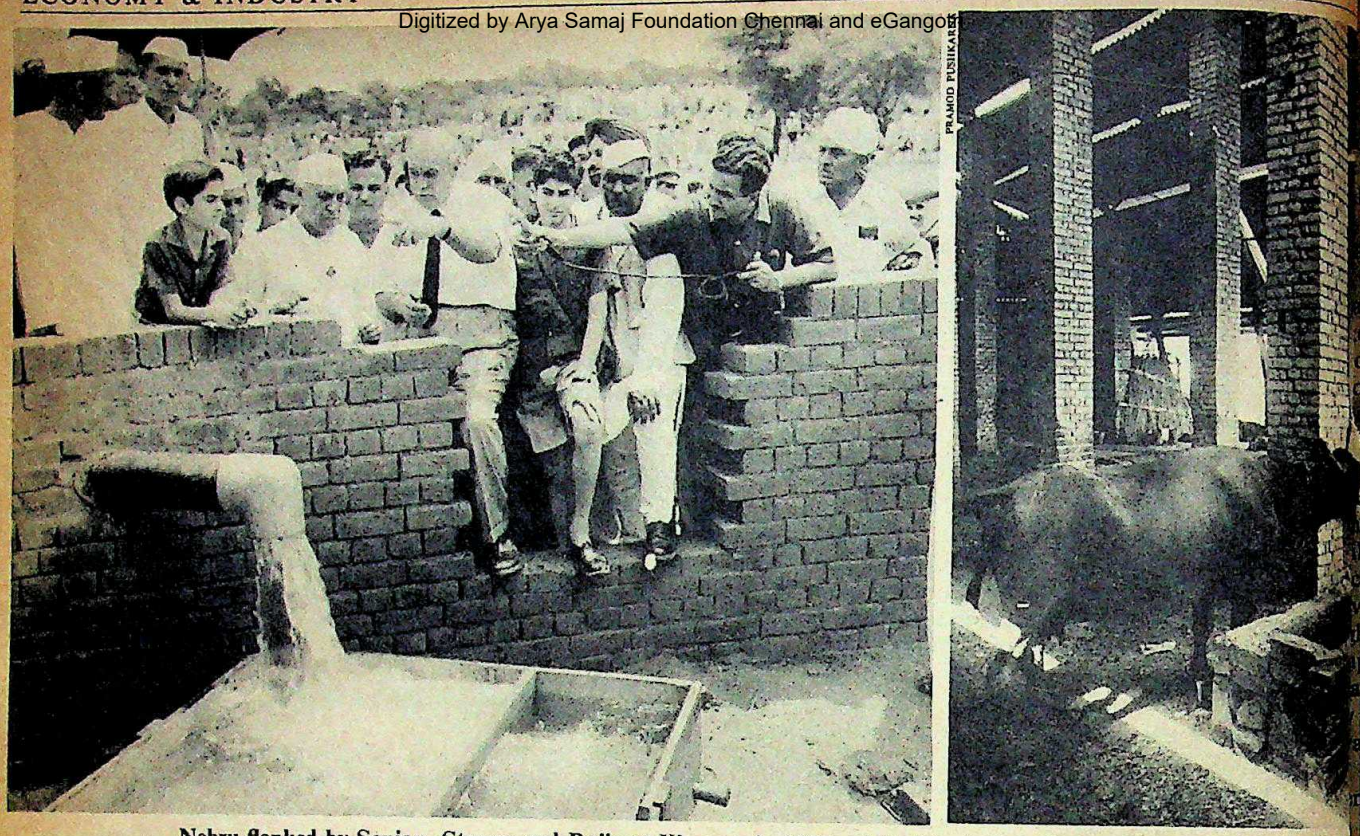
MORE HASTE, LESS SPEED

THE CANCELLING of the steel plant contract with Davy McKee of Britain means a loss of virtually three years spent in negotiating the deal. Other contracts have similarly extended negotiation histories: the choice of an aircraft for feeder air services has hung fire for eight years during which period no fewer than four committees have gone into the question; the negotiations for an electronic telecommunication equipment factory has gone on for over two years without a final decision; the choice of a new telephone instrument is still undecided after two years of parleys; offers by foreign companies for setting up superthermal power stations have been awaiting a decision for virtually a year; and 18 months after oil exploration was thrown open to the international oil companies, a contract has been signed with just one company for one offshore block.

In these and many other cases, a major advantage in opting for foreign contracts is said to be speedier work by overseas companies. But the delays in finalising the contracts almost always neutralise the time gained in project execution. A case of more haste, less speed?

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PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Nehru flanked by Sanjay, Stevens and Rajiv at Khanpur in 1957 and (right) a buffalo at the village today

TECHNOLOGY

The Lesson Of Khanpur

SMALL may be beautiful but is it always sensible? Fritz Schumacher may not have suffered such doubts but then Schumacher never visited Khanpur, a small village near Delhi, which offered itself as a guinea-pig for a Schumacher-type experiment in small-scale technology long before the great man had burst on the world scene as an apostle of the new human-scale economics.

"Production of electricity by bullock power was proved both possible and practical in an experiment successfully conducted last month in Khanpur, a small village outside Delhi," said a hand-out from the Ford Foundation carried by New Delhi newspapers on their front pages on a bright summer day 25 years ago this month. The experiment drew visitors from all over the country, including Jawaharlal Nehru who visited the place twice, once with his young grandsons, Sanjay and Rajiv Gandhi, in tow. "Rajiv wore knickers and a check shirt with short sleeves," recalls Jairam Patwari, a peppery old man who was then about 30 and, along with most of his friends, a curious bystander in the village drama.

Khanpur was then an isolated village nestling beside a swamp about a couple of kilometres from Kutub Minar. Why the Ford Foundation descended upon it is not known but the experiment was conducted by a US management consultant, Leigh Stevens, with the assistance of well-known US firms, including General Electric and Westinghouse. The Indian Government was also an enthusiastic participant—those were the days of community development—and the stream of visitors included the late President Rajendra Prasad, Morarji Desai, Gulzarilal Nanda, and others.

Project Details: The scheme involved the generation of electricity by bullocks operating a specially designed contraption which worked a generator which in turn supplied power to a wood-working shop set up in the village and also provided power supply to light houses and street lamps throughout the village. The bullock-generated power was only one aspect of the project. The bullocks also powered an irrigation pump which was said to "lift at least double or possibly more water than the Persian wheel".

The complex included, apart from the workshop and a smithy, an improved brick-making kiln making bricks "up to 10 times as hard as those produced by traditional methods at low cost". The pump unit, de... and supplied by a US firm, Tennes... Transmission Company of Houston, ... had a capacity of 300 gallons per ... more than six times that of the trad... Persian wheel. And the electric gen... also of special design, was capable of ... ing 4.5 kilowatt of power, enough to ... a small village industry employing 4... people or light 150 houses. That w... cisely the number of households in K... then and the scheme seemed tailored t... about a Schumacherian revolution ... cost—around Rs 2 lakh—and with v... no running expenses except the c... maintenance of bullocks which roam... village lanes as if they owned the pla...

"In estimating the future impli... and possibilities of bullock-powere... pliances," said a note prepared ... Foundation, "it is interesting to note t... combined potential power of bullo... India is probably greater than the ... installed public power now available ... United States (124 million kilowatt)... American planners and their Indian c... parts must have had visions of serried ... of bullocks going round and round ... ponds producing more power than ...

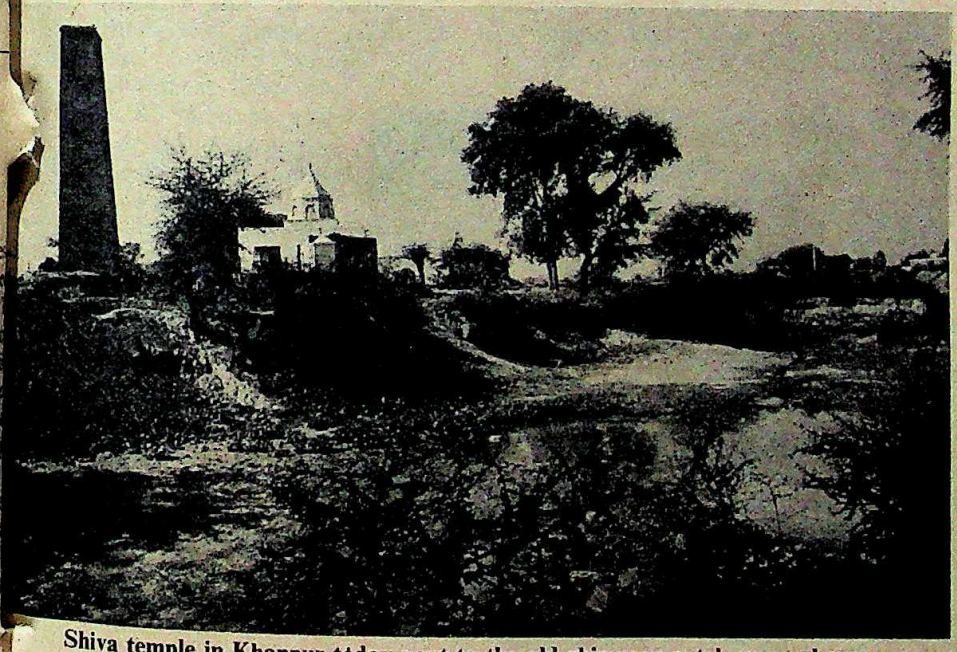
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modar Valley and Tarapur put together supplying it to millions of village work-ps and smithies and churning out bricks the billion for the homes of the new lock-powered bourgeoisie.

Faint Memory: The bullocks are still ming the narrow lanes of Khanpur and e overrun the entire complex which re-ns just a faint memory for older people Jairam Patwari and his friends. The jects, scattered over the village, are over-own with weeds. The workshop was tur-into a stable for buffaloes long ago and an who runs it laughed off a suggestion the INDIA TODAY team when it visited the last month that they might be better ployed producing electricity rather than k. "Electricity?" asked Kallu, his mous-he aquiver at the shocking suggestion. He ted the team into his house, switched on a t—powered by the Delhi Electricity pply Undertaking—and proceeded to ke *lassi* in a Japanese blender presented his nephew, a prosperous accountant actising in Delhi.

The site where the bullocks drove the erator is now a DTC depot awash in buses



Shiva temple in Khanpur today next to the old chimney: catch-up syndrome

d pick-ups. The kiln was bricked up long o and the tank that was expected to supply water requirements lies disused near the mney. The only sign of life is the soft ging of a priest in the new Shiva temple ich the villagers have recently put up not from the old chimney, and the unloading bricks in the adjoining lane where a firm of lhi-based contractors is busy putting up uses for sale. "The most expensive thing in anpur today," says Banwarlal Agarwal, a armacy college student, "is neither electri-y nor water, but land." The plots are going for Rs 300 to Rs 500 a square metre and are being snapped up so fast by the prosperous villagers that Khanpur will soon be just another dormitory town. Civilisation began creeping up on Khanpur long ago and the place is now indistinguishable from scores of similar villages which dot Delhi and which were never visited by intense foreign and Indian "experts" offering a new way of life on the cheap.

THE KHANPUR experiment has obviously failed, but why? The villagers themselves never took it seriously and were disinterested onlookers rather than enthusiastic participants in what appeared to them as an experiment conducted by "outsiders". (In Khanpur, anyone not born or working in the village is an outsider). Jairam believes that the whole thing was a lark and blames officials from Delhi for taking it more seriously than it deserved. He is an unlettered man and cannot really explain why the experiment did not take off. "I have a feeling that we were being fobbed off with second-rate technology just because we were rural folk," he says. Most of his friends have graduated from bullocks to sewing machines and run profitable ready-made garment manufacturing outfits side by side with ancient, smelly dairies. The bullocks and the buffaloes will soon disappear from the Khanpur scene and only the sewing machines will remain. "That," says Jairam, "will be progress."

Most advocates of the so-called appropriate technology (AT) believe that increases in government regulation have occurred in response to the increasing size and impact of advanced technology. They point out that this "government explosion" has occurred in every industrialised nation, regardless of ideology. By contrast, the social philosophy of the AT movement tends to favour a shrinking of government. They complain that growing technical, organisational and regulatory complexity leaves the ordinary citizen powerless to understand or influence the choices that affect him. Hence the stress on technologies that allow individuals and communities to reduce their dependence on large, remote institutions.

Catch-up Syndrome: But this is not how Khanpur sees it. Like most Indian villages, it was a backwater and it did not want to remain a backwater. It does not favour shrinking of government; it wants more government. It wants more power, more up-to-date transportation, more factories, more schools and colleges, more jobs and more modern technology. Since this is virtually impossible without more government, it does not mind more government. Also, since modern factories are impossible without new technology, Khanpur is keen on new technology, no matter how complex it is. "We have to catch up with the cities and with the rest of the world and can't forever remain backward" is how one solemn Khanpur gentleman put it. He is himself unlettered but has managed to put most of his children through college and all are living away from the family.

The catching-up syndrome is very much a part of the mental make-up of the villager. It is not only the poor countries who want to catch up with the rich ones, or the so-called developing countries with the advanced nations, but the poor and the backward in every country are anxious to catch up with their more affluent and advanced neighbours. Just as there cannot be a technology for the United States and another for, say, India, there cannot be a separate technology for, say, New Delhi, and another for Khanpur. When Indian officials go out shopping for new technology, they want the best and the latest, immaterial of its social and political implications. Khanpur people are too poor to go out on technology shopping expeditions but they too want the best and the latest and are sufficiently resilient to be able to withstand pressures resulting therefrom. The Khanpurs want to get away from bullocks, dung-cakes and open sewers just as city folk want to get away from wood-burning stoves, rickety cars and stinking trains, and just as the latter cannot be fobbed off with second-best machinery and technology, the Khanpurs too cannot be mollified with bullock-driven power and 20-watt bulbs, whatever Schumacher and others might say in their best sellers. That, for the time being, is the lesson of Khanpur.

—JAY DUBASHI

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CREDIT

The Crush Of '82?

INDUSTRIALISTS say it is a crisis. No it isn't, says the Government. Government is blind, as usual, say the industrialists. Industry is crying wolf, as usual, says the Government. We're getting strangled by the credit squeeze, says industry. But there isn't a squeeze any more, insists the Reserve Bank. Can't you see we have run into a slump in demand, asks industry. But if there is no demand, why aren't prices coming down, asks the Government.

It is the classic dialogue between industry and government: cries of anguish and pleas for immediate relief from one side and a sceptical arching of the eyebrow from the other. And, as usual, somewhere in between, the truth becomes a casualty.

The dialogue has been repeated many times before. But, this time around, there does seem to be a genuine problem. How serious, it is difficult to say, but the facts are disturbing.

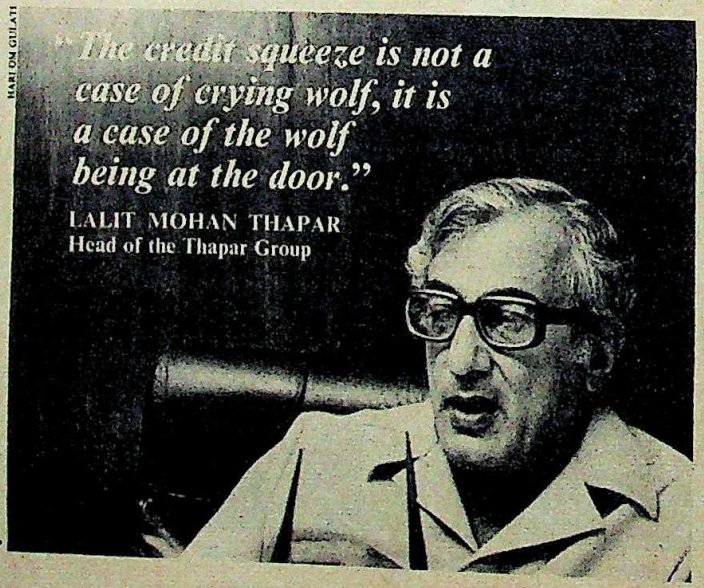
Production Cuts: The Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company (TELCO) has cut truck production by 50 per cent in April, 33 per cent in May, and plans another 33 per cent cut in June. Ashok Leyland, the other major truck manufacturer, has cut production by 30 per cent and slowed down its expansion programme.

Over 60 textile mills in Bombay have been on strike for more than four months (*see page 75*), causing a 20 per cent drop in the supply of mill-made cloth. Yet there is no shortage in the market. Demand has dropped sharply. Dyestuff units and textile machinery manufacturers are now feeling the pinch of the textile strike and recession. "Rs 33 crore worth of machinery is lying ready, but the textile mills don't have the money to take delivery," says Sumant Patel, president of the All-India Manufacturers' Organisation. Half-a-dozen polyester fibre manufacturers face a serious demand and production problem. Prices have reportedly dropped 20 per cent.

The fertiliser companies now hold 70 per cent more stocks than they did this time last year, because the farmers are not buying as much as they should. The stocks already on hand cannot be fully sold till December. The biggest fertiliser producer, the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative, has slashed production, and most companies have cut prices 15 to 20 per cent. Most of the chemical industry is in a bad way. Rs 120 crore worth of caustic soda is lying around unsold. Soda ash too had piled up, till Tata Chemicals slashed prices in order to get rid of the stockpile.

The paper mills are running at two-thirds of their capacity, the lowest ever, because the market seems to have shrunk. Prices of cream-wove paper, the most common variety, have dropped by up to 10 per cent, and the manufacturers say the situation is getting worse.

Steel Glut: Over a million tonnes of steel are piled up in the stockyards, waiting for buyers. A few months ago there was a steel shortage. The 25 per cent premium on steel prices has vanished and most varieties are available off the shelf. The producers of special alloy steels are screaming blue murder; the Mahindra Ugine Steel Company plans to produce only 50,000 tonnes this year, down from 68,000 tonnes in 1981.



HARI ON GULATI

Imports and lack of orders have also hit wire rod manufacturers like Modi Steel. Aluminium, an item in perennial short supply, now waits for buyers.

Irrigation pump-sets are not selling. Kirloskar Oil Engines in Pune is running a five-day week.

The engineering industry in particular sees hard times ahead. The railways have slashed orders for new freight wagons from 18,000 last year to 13,000. Tractor manufacturers are among the worst hit, and most have cut production drastically. In a typical case, International Tractors has slashed out- 25 per cent.

The demand is poor for almo consumer durable: TV sets, refrige fans. Even in cars, dealers in some ar offering small discounts. Automobile laries are doing particularly badly, country's biggest forge company is li switch to a four-day week. Tyre pr have started offering bigger disco dealers.

OVERALL, anywhere between 40 per cent of Indian indu probably hit by the combined e of the credit squeeze and demand Industrial growth in the year of prod could be down from 8 per cent last y barely 4 per cent—or so say the t chambers of commerce, the Federa Indian Chambers of Commerce and try (FICCI) and the Associated Cham Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM). is not a case of crying wolf, it is a the wolf being at the door," says Thapar, head of the Thapar group of tries.

Publicly at least, virtually ever dustrialist blames everything on credit squeeze: farmers aren't b tractors, pump-sets or liser because the banks h stopped giving them credit; tru operators aren't buying because fresh loans have frozen; the slashing of limits across the board by 30 per cent for most ind has forced them to reduce tories and cut off-take. T units have passed on the crunch by simply susp payments to smaller an units, who are far and aw worst hit.

Money Impounded: theless, the squeeze ori not with large industry b the Government and the R Bank of India (RBI). Alar the continuing runaway inf the RBI announced a year a the banks would have to keep more o money locked up with the RBI an Government. The logic was that price rising because there was too much floating around, and impounding ban ney would reduce bank loans and th the total supply of money in the econ

For six months, the banks treat RBI's directive lightly and lent more comers. In November, the RBI got and came down heavily with fresh r tions and deterrent penalties for nonco ance (*see page 67*). Caught in a

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ing pincer, the banks resorted to unprecented crisis measures, refusing in some es to provide working capital for even units which they had helped set up in the place. Says the chairman of a major mbay-based bank: "We had to pull down shutters and say no to everybody."

The results were dramatic—or traumatic. In the six months to April-end, commercial credit rose by only Rs 1,680 crore, rely half the increase of Rs 3,248 crore in corresponding period a year earlier.

Factors: But, however important the it squeeze is as an explanation for y's problems, it isn't by any means the explanation. "People don't like to talk out it, but we have a recession on our nds," says industrialist Keshub hindra, who lists three other factors for current problems: the liberal import icy, reduced government spending in key as, and an undisguised drop in demand.

The new import policy has seen the rket getting flooded with imported alloy ls, soda ash, viscose fibre, aluminium, iliser and even ball bearings. Imports in e cases are now getting reduced, but mestic producers have already been forto pile up unsold stocks, and viscose fibre nufacturers have in two cases completely down production.

pace. Inevitably, people have been forced to reduce or postpone buying of cloth, refrigerators, fans and television sets.

Problem Production: In many areas, a demand problem has come about because of increased production: the railways now carry more freight because of increased efficiency, so the demand for trucks has fallen as trucking rates have dropped. The power shortage has eased slightly, so farmers are less keen on investing in diesel pump-sets. In trucks, tractors and other items, production has picked up sharply in the last couple of years, and demand has failed to keep pace.

As shortages have disappeared, the artificial demand created by pre-emptive overbookings has evaporated. Cement is a classic case: open market prices have already dropped from Rs 74 per bag to Rs 60, and Sanjay Ladiwala, president of the Cement Stockists and Dealers Association of Bombay, says prices will drop further to Rs 50 per bag and still lower. "Three months from now, there will be such a glut that cement manufacturers may have to cut back production," warns Ladiwala.

The depressing truth seems to be that in many areas the economy is unable to maintain rapid growth in output. Says a well-known business economist: "1981–82 was only the third time in 15 years that we achieved an 8 per cent industrial growth rate. And on both the previous occasions also, a demand slump followed immediately. Perhaps the base of our economy is too narrow to sustain quick growth for more than a short burst."

Many other observers think the problem now goes far beyond the question of just credit. But the businessman has fixed on the credit squeeze as the prime culprit. Says a director of Tata Industries: "It is the credit squeeze that has aggravated the other problems. If there was more money available, things wouldn't be quite so bad."

Observes Raunaq Singh, president of ASSOCHAM: "The credit squeeze has helped contain prices, but it has now gone too far. In any case, some amount of inflation is good for the economy." Adds S.K. Modi of the Modi group: "I've been in business for 16 years. And I haven't seen a cash problem as serious as this."

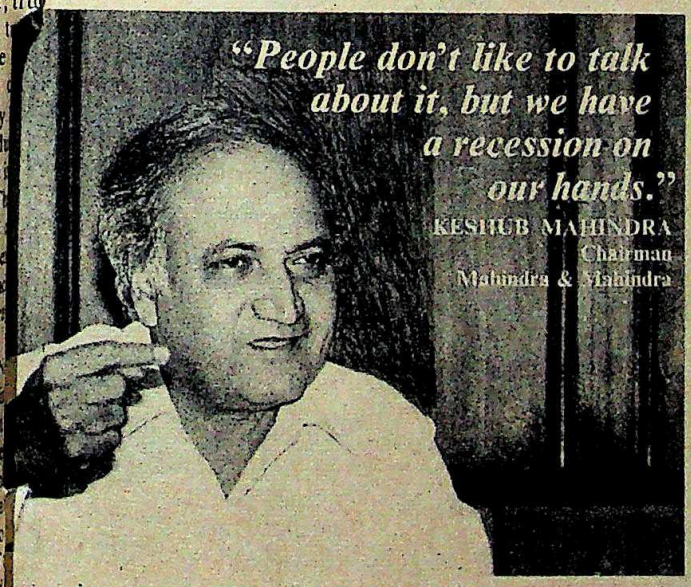
Conflicting Claims: The Government, however, sees things differently. "It is difficult to deny that there are problems in some areas, but any talk of a recession is premature," says Bimal Jalan, chief economic adviser in the Finance Ministry. "The credit squeeze was necessary in order to control prices, and we have certainly eased up on this since April," he adds.

Officials throw up other arguments to deflect criticism from industry. "There cannot be both a recession and a shortage of credit," argues one, "since a recession by definition implies a reduced need for credit."

The import policy, another point of attack, is defended as necessary and overdue. Says Jalan: "Before they complain about cheaper imports, industrialists should first explain why their own prices are so high. Tata Chemicals reduced its soda ash prices, and today it has no selling problem. Why don't others do the same? You tell me there is a recession in textiles. But then why have textile prices gone up?"

Officials also argue that both the Government and the Reserve Bank have responded quickly to genuine problems. Says one: "There was a genuine credit problem in March, so in early April the RBI has relaxed on this considerably. A great deal more money has now been made available."

"They may have relaxed credit policy,





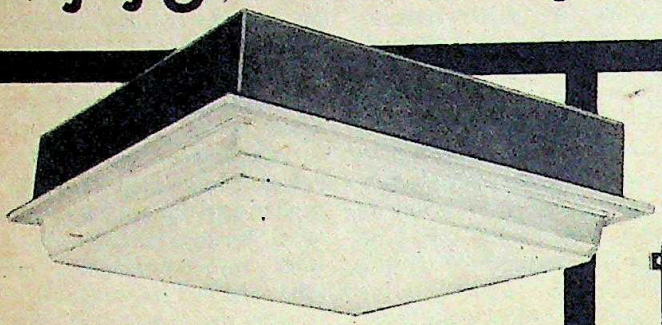
Reduced spending by the railways and electricity boards have caused problems wagon manufacturers, the aluminium ustry and electrical goods and machinery nufacturers. And many state road transrt corporations have no money to order w buses.

Mahindra's third reason is equally imtant: there has been a straight drop in mand in many crucial sectors. Consumer ces have increased over 40 per cent in ee years, while wages simply haven't kept

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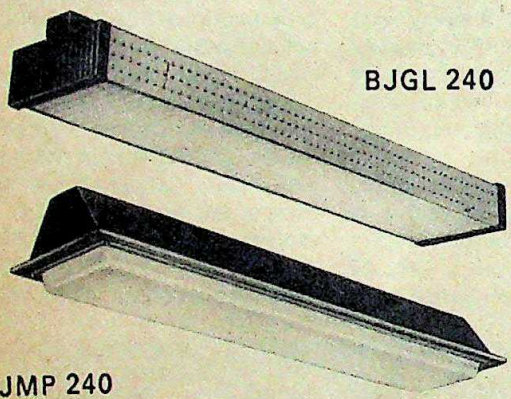
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Since light has no form, Bajaj gives it many shapes and sizes.



DECORATIVE

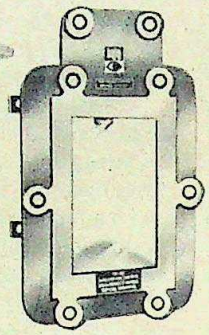
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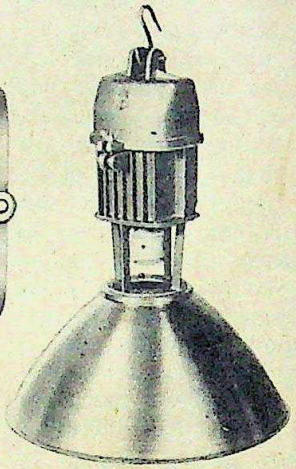
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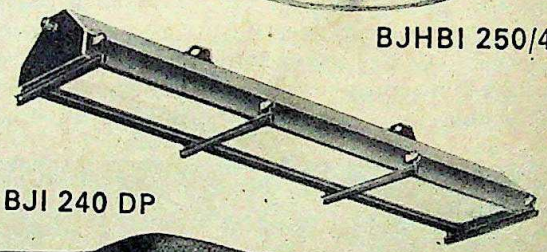
INDUSTRIAL



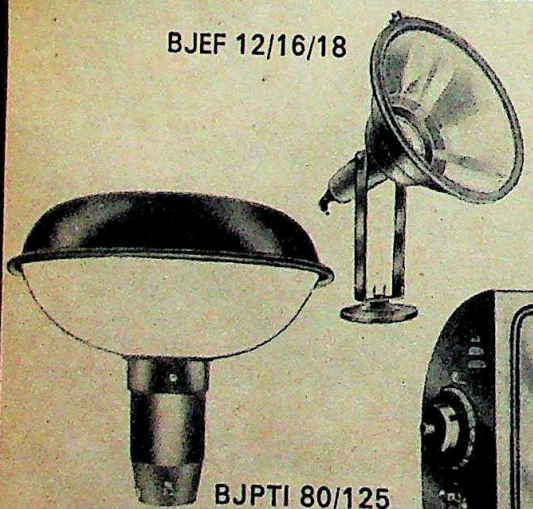
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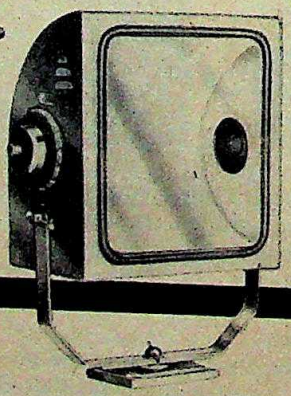


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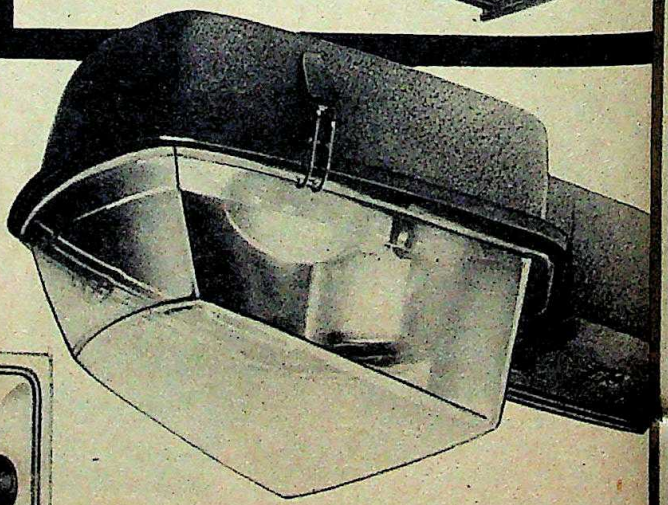


BJEF 12/16/18

BJPTI 80/125



BJEF 22



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OUTDOOR

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The lighting people since 1938.

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we still don't see any money," counters . Pai Panandikar, secretary-general of I. And most businessmen see the difficult it situation continuing for a couple of nths at least. "The cash squeeze has ady forced industry to liquidate stocks," K.K. Modi, vice-chairman Modis. Thapar goes a step further: "This pho- about inflation is causing havoc, and t industries are being forced to postpone pansion plans because they don't have the ey to invest. This will lead in three years reater shortages and a much worse ation. The whole policy is counter-productive."

Confusing Perceptions: If businessmen are pessimistic, the RBI is unable to see any problem at all. Says an RBI spokesman with supreme aplomb: "The credit situation now is very satisfactory." That is the kind of statement likely to give industrialists apoplexy before they get strangled by the squeeze.

More pertinently, it brings into sharp focus the fact that industry is helpless in the presence of a kaleidoscope of official perceptions of the situation: the Industry Ministry sees a genuine problem, and is desperately worried that the year of productivity might end up as a fiasco; the Finance Ministry is still cautious about easing up for fear of letting inflation loose and conscious too, perhaps, of the International Monetary Fund's watchful eyes.

The Commerce Ministry does not want to modify its liberal import policy despite protests about dumping, partly because the new policy has become an article of faith; the banks say they would like to help, but can't; and the RBI of course sees no problem at all. It all seems a variation of the old story about the six blind men of Hindoostan.

—T.N. NINAN

BANKS

Immoral Squeeze

NO MATTER how badly industry may be hit by the credit squeeze, it hasn't by any means been knocked as severely as the banks. Some of the country's biggest banks have been rocked to their foundations by the turning of the screws by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and crushing penalties for failure to meet with RBI requirements. According to one estimate, the banks have already paid out in penalties more than their total profits in 1981. "There hasn't been a crisis like this in the history of Indian banking," said the chief executive of a nationalised bank.

The RBI uses two screws to tighten funds flow: it asks the banks to keep a part of their deposits in RBI vaults as "cash reserve" and forces them to invest another chunk in government securities (through the "statutory liquidity ratio"). Over the last year, the RBI has raised the cash reserve ratio (CRR) from 6 per cent of the banks' total deposits to 8 per cent, impounding over Rs 800 crore, and then raised the statutory liquidity ratio from 34 to 35 per cent, impounding a further Rs 400 crore. The CRR has since been lowered to 7.25 per cent, from April 8.

Stiff Penalties: Penalties for not complying with these mandatory stipulations are back-breaking: even for a marginal shortfall on the CRR, the banks lose all interest payments on their cash deposits with the RBI and also have to pay a 3 to 5 per cent penal interest rate on their borrowings.

The first law for any banker is to meet these RBI stipulations. "Failing to do so," said one, "is like losing your virginity." Yet, between January and March, 20 of the 21 nationalised banks lost theirs when they failed at some stage to meet the reserve requirements. In some cases, the banks defaulted for 12 successive weeks, signifying a complete collapse of all banking norms.

The State Bank of India (SBI), with deposits of over Rs 10,000 crore (almost a quarter of the national total) was one of the biggest defaulters. At one stage the bank was reportedly paying out Rs 6 crore per week in penalties. In two weeks alone, it paid out more in penalties than its total profits in 1981. SBI Managing Director S.V. Natarajan declined to meet INDIA TODAY or comment on these figures.

In the face of this unprecedented crunch, and confronted by an unrelenting RBI, what crumpled was basic banking morality. In a desperate hunt for money that simply wasn't there, some banks allegedly started paying illegal commissions to big depositors, mostly public sector bodies, as inducement to shift their deposit accounts. Cases are being talked about of chief executives with money to spare summoning bankers and asking them to bid for the deposits. Top executives of two major nationalised banks referred to these and other malpractices.

"In the face of this unprecedented crunch, and confronted with an unrelenting Reserve Bank of India, what crumpled was basic banking morality . . . a desperate hunt for money that simply wasn't there."

Illegal Methods: International banks, trapped just as badly, resorted to other illegal means: prospective borrowers were told there was no money unless they brought in fresh deposits. So the borrower would get hold of someone with money elsewhere, bring him before the bank, and then strike a deal: the depositor would shift his deposit to the bank, which would give the borrower a part of the sum as loan, and the borrower would agree to pay the depositor additional interest in cash—over and above the legal interest paid by the bank to the depositor.

In more minor transgressions, banks have been opening institutional savings bank accounts (which pay interest) instead of limiting them to current accounts (which pay no interest). And banks defaulting continuously on RBI reserve requirements have pooled resources and rotated weekly defaults among themselves so that all of them did not default all the time.

The worst, however, is now over. With the RBI deciding to reduce the cash reserve ratio from 8 to 7.25 per cent, most banks have now managed to cover their positions, and are no longer in default. But few bankers are even now willing to start lending to customers, primarily because money still isn't coming in. Deposits were expected to grow by Rs 1,700 crore in the April-June quarter, but had shown little growth till mid-May.

Some banks reported an absolute decline in deposits during some weeks. The previous quarter, January-March, had been just as bad. And many bankers were beginning to wonder whether the credit squeeze had begun to feed on itself: many big depositors seemed to be pulling money out of the banks, which offer a maximum 10 per cent interest, and putting it into the private money market, where interest rates vary between 24 and 36 per cent. "We may now be choking ourselves with the squeeze," confessed an RBI executive.

—T.N. NINAN

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STEEL

The Dumping Of Davy

IT WAS a project meant to propel the country into an era of rapid expansion in steel, breaking a 15-year stagnation in production capacity. Instead, after over 18 months of negotiations and haggling, what resulted last fortnight was an unmitigated fiasco: on May 13, the Government finally decided to call off its deal with Davy McKee of Britain for a 1.5 million tonne steel plant at Daitari, Orissa.

The decision resulted in red faces all around, but much more was lost than mere face. Over and above the time already lost, another six months to a year would be needed to tie up new contracts with overseas suppliers; and the fact that the plant would now be built under domestic supervision would inevitably mean yet more delays in construction. With each delay, costs would rise. Also, where would the Government find the money to set up a steel plant on its own? Tying up overseas finances would be both difficult and time-consuming.

For all that, the contract with Davy had become manifestly unworkable. Not only did the British company go back on its commitment last year to build the steel plant at a fixed price on a turnkey basis in 45 months, Davy was also asking for nothing less than a 40 per cent mark-up on its initial quotation of $2.84 billion (Rs 2,556 crore). "At the new price that Davy wanted," said one official, "the steel plant would have been financially unviable, and a millstone round our necks."

Contract Hurdles: Unable to agree on a new price, Davy wanted to go back on the very concept of a turnkey contract, preferring instead to merely supply equipment—but even this was to be at sharply increased prices. The company wanted $950 million (Rs 855 crore) more than its original quotation of $1,800 million (Rs 1,620 crore) for the supply of equipment.

Going further, Davy tried to downgrade some of the equipment specifications. The steel plant's single blast furnace was to have had the capacity to turn out 5,000 tonnes of hot metal per day; but the blast furnace offered by Davy would have delivered no more than 4,400 tonnes. In effect, this would have reduced the plant's overall capacity from 1.5 million tonnes to 1.3 million tonnes. And this smaller plant was being offered at a price 40 per cent higher than initially quoted.

Davy was caught with its pants down on other scores. The rolling mill for Daitari was being offered by the German company Schloemann Semag (a member of the Davy consortium) at a price 50 per cent higher than that of a similar rolling mill, offered by the same company, for the other steel complex coming up at Visakhapatnam.

Persistent Problems: "The whole thing would have turned out to be another Durgapur," said a steel official, referring to the unhappy experiences with the earlier steel plant built with British help. The Durgapur steel plant's capacity has had to be derated following persistent problems in reaching the stated capacity, and there have been innumerable other difficulties with the plant's equipment. "We have lost a great deal in calling off the deal, but we would have lost much more if we had gone through with it," the official added.

Davy McKee's representative in Delhi, Neil Cherrett, refused to comment on any of these issues, but the company's going back on its initial commitments was apparently based on a perception of the deal as part of a broader Indo-British *entente cordiale*. The strategy seems to have been to sharply reduce its initial quotation—by $500 million (Rs 450 crore), last August—in order to knock out competition, and then to jack prices up by much more once the deal was in the bag.

> ***"Whatever the future holds for Daitari, it is certain to go down as a monument to faulty planning and poor decision-making."***

Officials also say Davy behaved as though it could get away with anything, a false sense of confidence encouraged by the high access apparently enjoyed by some businessmen working on its behalf. Yet Mrs Gandhi was reportedly adamant that the deal not go through on the revised terms.

In losing the contract, Davy has had to write off close to a million pounds spent in bidding for the contract, and also lost 50,000 man-years of work—a crushing burden for the already crippled British steel industry. Nevertheless, a week after the cancellation of the contract, Davy was still putting a brave face on events and hoping to salvage some part of the contract in a revised form. officials, however, saw little chance

Poor Handling: Meanwhile, ot the industry were stressing the ham-h handling of the project from the star

► The project was initially loca Paradip, until it was discovered th cyclone-prone coastal strip was a " trap". The man who pointed this o summarily removed from the chairm of the Steel Authority of India Ltd, b project was nevertheless moved inla

► The plant was initially meant export-oriented, and a turnkey foreign tract was justified on the ground that foreign exchange outgo involved in would be recouped quickly through ex But soon enough all notions of export given up, signified by changing the product from light to medium structu

► The negotiations were conducte manner that put the cart before the h The Davy bid was accepted befor detailed technical specifications for the were finalised, and without negotiation Davy being carried out on its tender

► The very concept of a turnkey plant defied logic: as officials now ad deal that ties the contracting company to a fixed cost and fixed commissio schedule, while simultaneously asking maximise the indigenous content, made sense at all. To keep to its commitments company would simply cut technical co in an effort to preserve its profits.

Said one official: "Whatever the f holds for Daitari, it is certain to go dow monument to faulty planning and decision-making."

Wary Officials: Meanwhile, rival companies who had earlier lost out to in the bidding were rushing back last night to see if they could get back in act. Mannesmann Demag quickly flew man from Germany to do the rou Delhi, and the Canadian mission w touch with officials to see if Met-Ch Canada could offer its services again.

Officials, however, were wary of in for fresh turnkey negotiations, and now emphasising the virtues of indig effort: the import content would be re costs for imported equipment wou lower if supplied against global tender the country after all had the capabi build a steel plant on its own.

But there would be costs as we indigenous effort would take longer time was money. There would be no the project, and money would have found to the extent that foreign borro did not cover the full project cost. O tended to play down these problems, essence there now loomed a large qu mark over Daitari.

—T.N.

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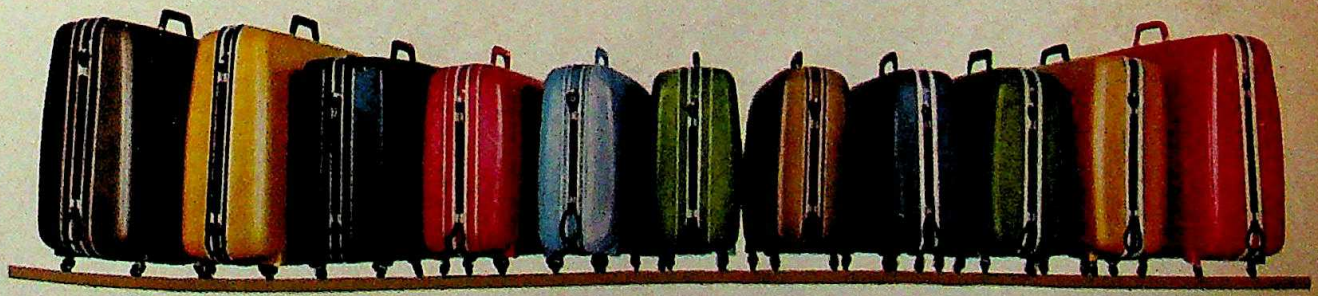
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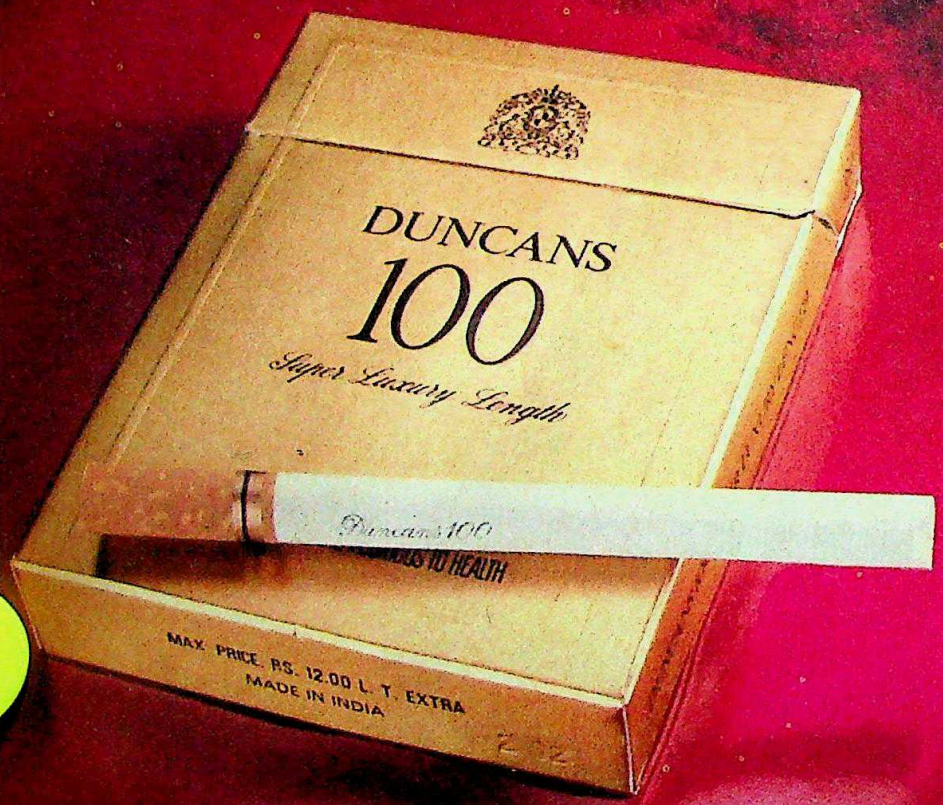
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APITAL MARKET

Tapping New Sources

A REVOLUTION is sweeping through India's financial markets. A dormant capital market that saw little growth in a decade s overnight quadrupled in size. Private mpanies last year raised Rs 423 crore ough share and debenture issues com- red with Rs 382 crore in the previous five ars. This unprecedented boom has sent a al wave of money flowing into industrial ffers:

In May alone, more money will pro- bly have been raised in the capital market n the Rs 112 crore in all of 1980–81. And much will be raised again in June.

Companies are flooded with far more oney than they asked for: the Hindustan velopment Corporation, a little-known mpany, asked the public for Rs 75 lakh a months ago and was offered 72 times t amount.

Some 68 companies are now waiting to se a further Rs 350 crore—a figure that lier would have taken up to three years to ch.

Companies that counted their shareholders in thousands now do so in lakhs. The holders' list at J.K. Synthetics will nd from 19,000 to 1.2 lakh, the Gujarat rmada Valley Fertiliser Corporation will n have five lakh and Reliance Textile ustries close to seven lakh shareholders. two years ago Hindustan Lever boasted largest number of shareholders: a mere 000.

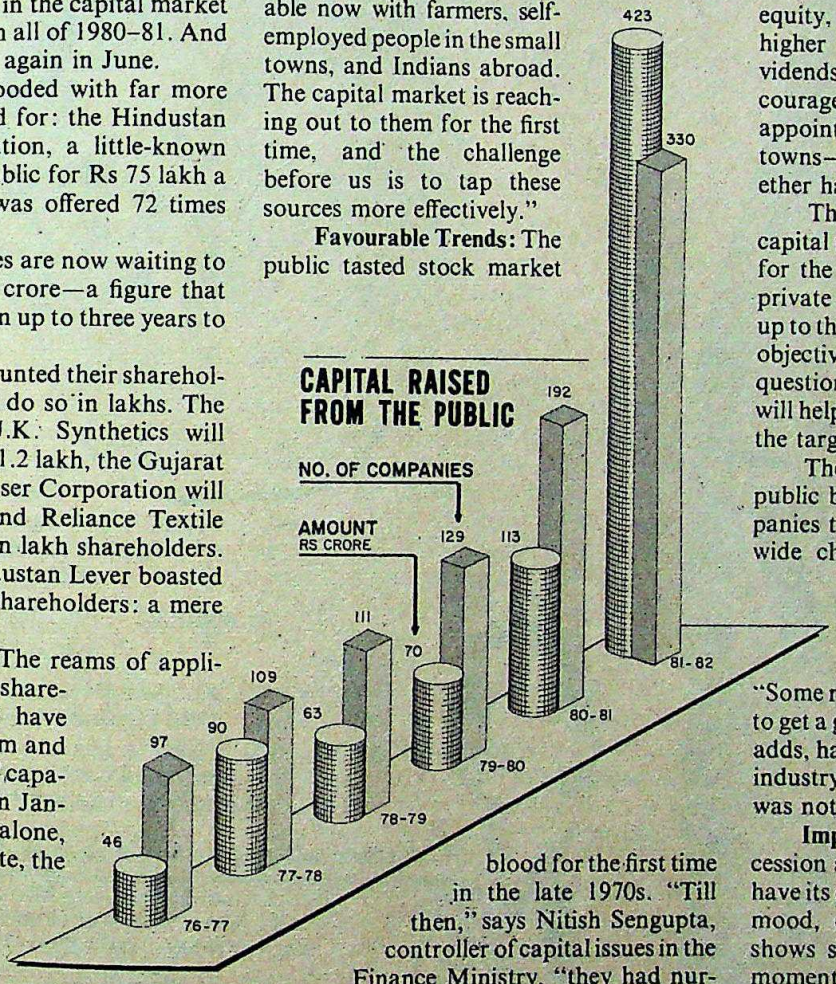
Investment Fever: The reams of applications from hopeful share- debenture-holders have ked the postal system and ined even the banks' capacities to their limits. In January and February alone, ording to one estimate, the offices had to e no fewer than lakh mailings on unt of capital es.

Overwhelmed by the response, the ernment is rapidly opening new stock anges in the smaller towns. In addition he original five at Bombay, Calcutta, medabad, Delhi and Madras, new stock anges have been—or soon will be—ned in Indore, Bangalore, Hyderabad, hin, Kanpur, Jaipur, Ludhiana, Rajkot Pune. The result will be a virtual trebling he number of stock exchanges in the ntry.

The fever has inevitably spread from the big cities to the small towns and even villages. Householders with the most conservative savings habits have suddenly turned into capital market sharks. What has caused this unprecedented boom? Will it last? Or is this a bubble that will burst without warning?

"Not so," says Dr Freddie Mehta of the Tata group of industries. "I am convinced this could not have happened without a new breed of investors materialising. There is a great deal of money available now with farmers, self-employed people in the small towns, and Indians abroad. The capital market is reaching out to them for the first time, and the challenge before us is to tap these sources more effectively."

Favourable Trends: The public tasted stock market blood for the first time in the late 1970s. "Till then," says Nitish Sengupta, controller of capital issues in the Finance Ministry, "they had nurtured the belief that the stock markets were unholy dens meant for speculators."



What changed this situation was the spate of share issues by foreign companies, who were forced to dilute their foreign shareholdings under the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act (FERA). Blue chip firms like Hindustan Lever and Colgate-Palmolive offered shares at a fraction of their ruling market prices, and the general public latched on quickly to the prospect of rapid appreciation of their initial investment.

This created the appetite for today's devouring of convertible debentures—fixed-term bonds which offer far better interest rates than the banks and promise rapid capital appreciation because a part of them can later be converted into shares—again, as under FERA, at a fraction of the ruling market prices.

Debenture issues have moved up astronomically: from Rs 7 crore in 1979–80 to Rs 45 crore in 1980–81, and Rs 211 crore in 1981–82. Riding in on their coat-tails, equity share issues too have grown sharply, from Rs 65 crore in 1980–81 to Rs 190 crore last year.

Encouragement: The Government has egged on the new gold rush by announcing a series of incentives for further investment: tax concessions for money put into new equity, higher interest rates on debentures, higher limits for tax-free payment of dividends, higher brokerage charges to encourage sharebrokers in the big cities to appoint sub-dealers in the smaller towns—and several minor facilities that together have had a formidable impact.

The official objective is to help the capital market raise Rs 1,000 crore annually for the private sector, the level required if private industrial investment is to measure up to the Sixth Plan target. That is a sky-high objective, given past trends. And the big question now is whether the current boom will help the Government and industry reach the target.

There is, already, some evidence of the public becoming choosy about which companies to invest in. "They now have such a wide choice of new issues; and perhaps people may want to invest only in the better companies," says Nimesh Kampani of J.M. Financial and Investment Consultancy Services. "Some recent public issues have in fact failed to get a good response." But these, Kampani adds, have been mainly in the troubled yarn industry, or in cases where the capital issue was not promoted properly.

Implications: Mehta feels that the recession affecting a number of industries will have its own impact on the public investment mood, especially when the stock market shows signs of losing some of its upward momentum. Sengupta thinks the period ahead will be one of consolidation. Says he: "A company with 5 lakh shareholders can easily go back to them for even Rs 1,000 each, and it will have raised Rs 50 crore."

Whatever the future trend, the implications of what has already occurred are tremendous. Says an economist: "The kind of boom in private investment signifies a radical change in the entire economy. It indicates the spread of basic capitalistic instincts, and should give the modern joint stock industry a broad, healthy base it did not have before."

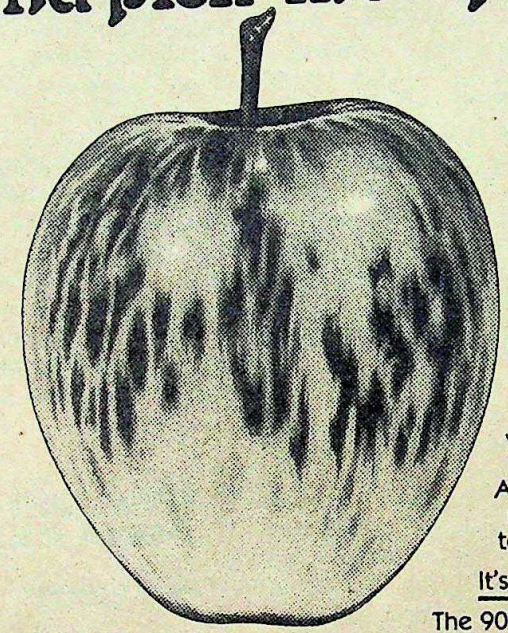
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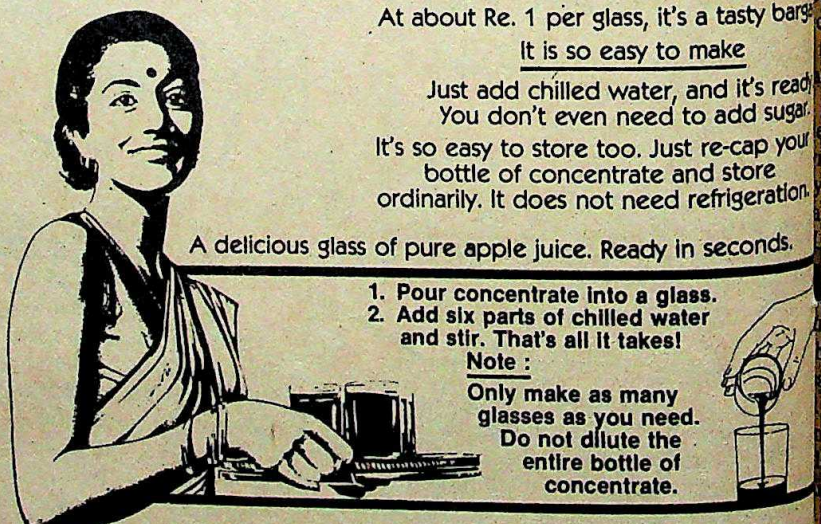
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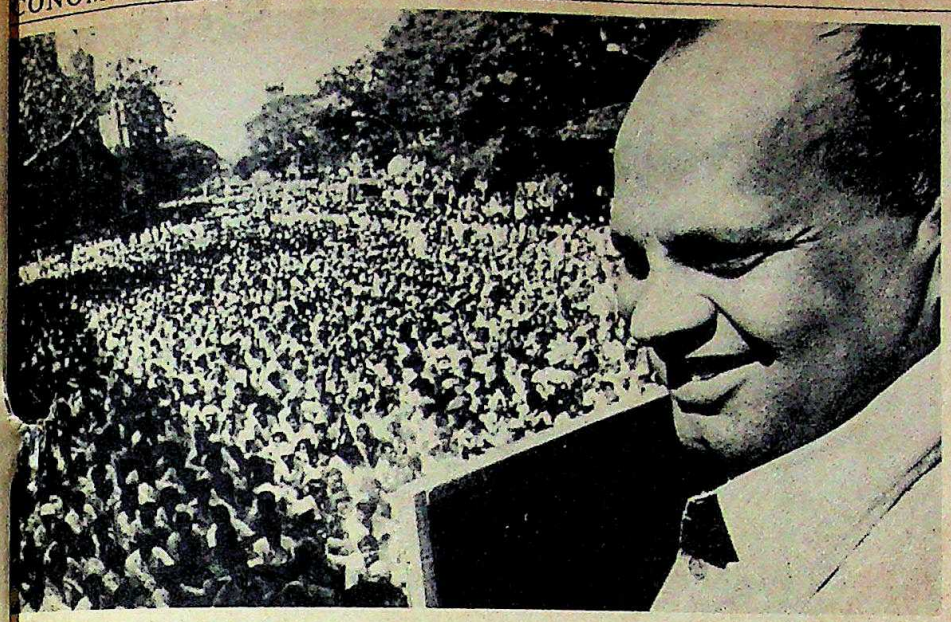
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Samant at a textile workers' rally in Bombay: deadlock continues

XTILES

The Longest Strike

T HAS already become the longest and most crippling strike in the history of Bombay's cotton textile industry. On y 18 the cotton textile strike led by ant labour leader Dr Datta Samant leted four months, surprising most watchers, industrialists and governt officials who had predicted that it ld fizzle out in half the time. By the end May, the 2.5 lakh striking workmen had over Rs 70 crore in wages for the strike od, the industry had lost roughly Rs 480 re in production, textile exports worth Rs crore from the Bombay mills were held up the pipeline and the country had lost rly Rs 50 crore in foreign exchange.

Despite the appalling losses to both es, the deadlock continues with the mill- ners refusing to give Samant the time of , and the controversial unionist equally mant about not calling off the strike. Said .N. Vijayanagar, secretary-general of the ely united Bombay Millowners' ciation: "There is no question of ne- iating. We have a legally valid agreement the recognised union and there is no sibility of our negotiating with Samant." textile strikes have a long history of g broken by the millowners, and the s last fortnight were stacked heavily nst Samant.

Psychological Pressure: The pressure on kmen to return to work was at its peak month. Mounting a concerted psy- logical campaign to undermine the st- rs' morale, the owners sent notices to 00 temporary workers warning them if they did not resume work forthwith would be permanently retrenched. Public announcements were made that even permanent workers would shortly be served with show-cause notices for holding an illegal strike.

The Government, which is concerned about the rapid spread of Samant's brand of trade unionism, is also determined to halt his triumphant march. And since the textile workers are Bombay's single largest and most unified work force, a permanent takeover by Samant could have made him virtually unstoppable and put him well on his way to making western India his exclusive domain.

After three months of waiting and watching, the Maharashtra Government made it clear in April that workmen would gain nothing by dragging on the strike. The implication was clear: dump Samant, resume work, and we will make sure you get a wage hike. The carrot and stick approach was summed up by Chief Minister Babasaheb Bhosale, who assured workmen that within two months of resumption he would ensure a fresh wage settlement. Says Ajit M. Nimbalkar, Bombay's diminutive labour commissioner: "Worker grievances will definitely be looked into, and it is an accepted fact now that workmen will get benefits once they return to work. But we want to stress that going on an illegal strike in defiance of established procedures will not win you your demands."

Virtually Unchanged: Surprisingly, even the combined millowner-government assault failed to bring home the bacon. By May-end despite threats by the millowners that they would close down their factories if the strike continued, only 11,000 workmen out of 2.5 lakh were back in the mills. The figure was virtually unchanged from the number who attended work a month earlier. And even this skeletal strength included a number of workers from outside mills and Bhiwandi powerlooms, brought in by the officially-recognised Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (RMMS), in an attempt at breaking the strike. Admitted Ashok Piramal, managing director of the Morarjee Goculdas mills, which normally employs about 8,500 workers: "Today we are operating with 600 workers, most of them from outside mills and Bhiwandi. Only 125 of these are our own workers."

More than 70 per cent of the textile work force is still to return from the villages in Maharashtra's Konkan and Vidarbha areas and Uttar Pradesh, where they had gone at the outset. But last fortnight Bombay millowners insisted that by mid-June the strike would be completely broken. Vijayanagar and RMMS President Basantrao Hoshing, united in their antipathy for Samant, argued that if 11,000 workmen were already manning the looms, it would not be long before the trickle of incoming workers turned into a flood. But Samant scoffs at this suggestion saying: "They think they can starve and humiliate the workmen into rejoining, but this will not happen. What are 10,000 out of 2.5 lakh? This is just a gimmick in their psychological warfare against workmen."

Obvious Blow: Although it has no direct bearing on the fate of the textile strike, Samant's defeat in the Thane Lok Sabha by-election last fortnight was an obvious blow to the labour leader. A victory would have meant even stronger support by the striking workers, and the enhanced status would have given him greater clout with both the owners and the Government. As it happened, his failure at the polls is certain to cut into his following at least partially.

Although Labour Commissioner Nimbalkar confirmed that the textile strike has been surprisingly docile for an agitation of its size, stray incidents of violence were increasingly being reported as the possibilities of a settlement receded further last month. Two Bombay Dyeing workmen had been stabbed in as many months, and one Samant supporter was hospitalised last month after a near fatal encounter with rivals. Incidents of intimidation and coercion, with victims from both camps, had become far more frequent. Having reached the stage of open confrontation, the four-month-old textile strike was moving slowly and inexorably towards a dangerous flash-point.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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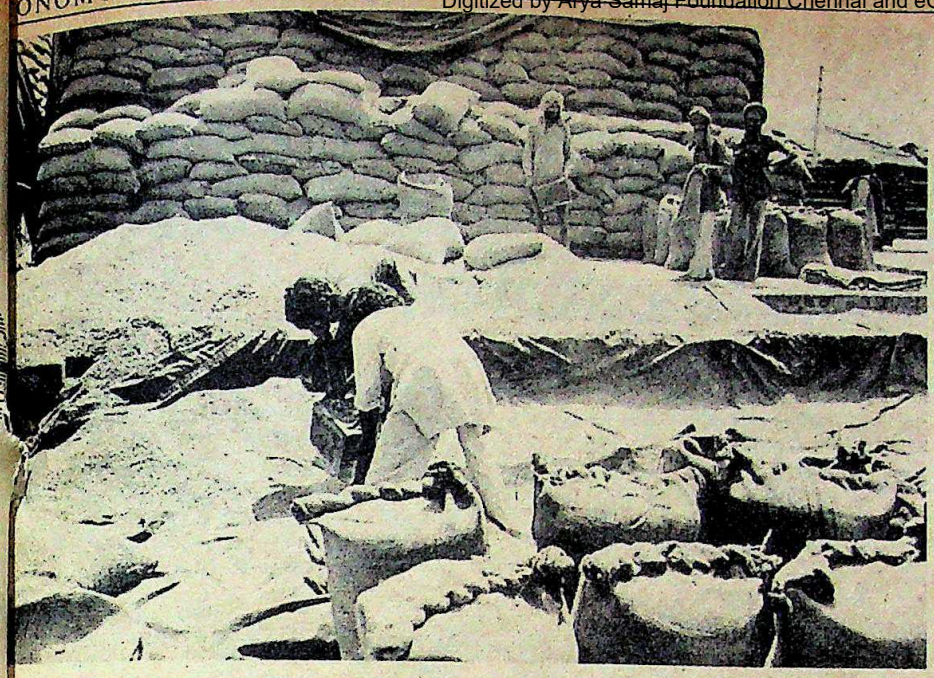
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Soaked paddy being unloaded: a grim parody of harvest cheer

NJAB

Soggy Harvest

T THIS time of the year, rural Punjab is usually awash with golden, harvested wheat. This year, er, the picture is a grim parody of nal harvest cheer.

Gurdas Singh, 65, surveys his fields in Ropar district's Pucci Rurki village. ee of his five acres of wheat have been royed by unseasonal rains. Laments das: "Who will buy this rotten wheat in *mandis* (grain markets), and how shall I ive?"

All over the Punjab, the country's grain- l, farmers echo similar tales of woe. ed, the rains have taken a heavy toll. al Singh, one of the big land-owners in hiana district's Sanghol village, is wait- for the knee-deep water in his fields to dry hat he can start harvesting. Says Satpal: this time we not only harvest our crop also finish selling it in the market. Nature een very unkind." In the same village, gat Singh, 55, expects to reap only 80 tals of wheat, instead of the usual 120 tals. Asks Singh plaintively: "How will I n the loans I have taken?"

Heavy Toll: The farmers' difficulties are cted grimly in the *mandis*. Khanna—aps the country's biggest grain di—has received only half the wheat it t this time last year. And in Khamano, her large *mandi*, only 44,000 bags of t had arrived by mid-May, compared to 0 at the same time last year. And across yana—in Shahabad, Kaithal and Kar- business was slack as the commission ts sat idle, waiting for the crops to dry.

Estimates of the crop damage vary, but there is little doubt that it has been extensive. Till the rains came, the farmers and the Government had been expecting an all-time record crop. Not any more. Farmers put their losses at anywhere between 10 and 50 per cent, but government officials are more circumspect. Says Kuldip Singh Janjua, Punjab's director of food and supply: "We will know the real situation when the entire stock has been threshed and brought to the market." Preliminary estimates in New Delhi are that over a million tonnes of wheat may have been lost because of the May rains.

Even before the untimely rains, food stocks with the Government had been low—lower, in fact, than even last year's unusually low levels. That situation had forced the Government to import 2.25 million tonnes of wheat from the United States and Australia. In today's situation, with procurement running at a fraction of normal levels, it seems entirely likely that fresh imports of four or five million tonnes would have to be ordered—costing the country Rs 800 crore to Rs 1,000 crore in increasingly scarce foreign exchange.

While officials huddled together at emergency meetings in New Delhi's Krishi Bhavan, pondering the future, the news from the *mandis* remained depressing. By May 14, only 11.23 lakh tonnes had reached Punjab's grain markets, barely half the 21.52 lakh tonnes on the same date last year. Grain arrivals in Haryana's markets totalled five lakh tonnes, down from 8.7 lakh tonnes on the same day last year.

Hard Decisions: The procurement agencies have to worry about more than the poor grain arrivals. They now have to decide whether to relax the quality standards they usually insist on while buying wheat. Wet grain is not good grain, and will not last more than six months in official godowns. So even if the wheat is bought by agencies like the Food Corporation, arrangements will have to be made to get rid of it quickly.

The Central Government's first response to the crisis was to despatch teams of experts to assess the damage, and recommend whether to relax the procurement specifications in the new situation. As an interim measure, and under pressure from the state governments, the Centre also increased short-term loans to help farmers tide over their immediate problems. In Punjab, the loans have been quadrupled from last year's level of Rs 2.5 crore to Rs 10 crore, and in Haryana they have been stepped up from Rs 2.5 crore last year to Rs 6.75 crore.

The hope in Delhi was that the poor arrivals of grain in the *mandis* would pick up once the crop started drying in the fields, and that the final damage would not be as heavy as initially feared. But the final arithmetic remained uncertain.

Beyond that lay another nagging worry. A wet May often presages a poor monsoon, which could wreak havoc with the coming kharif crop. Farmers, however battered, tend to take their losses stoically, but with further grain imports seemingly inevitable, the country as a whole would obviously have to wait awhile before it could talk of food self-sufficiency again.

—GOBIND THUKRAL

THE MARKETS

Uncertain Phase

THE MARKETS are once again in the lap of the gods—and politicians. The latter will soon be jostling for jobs in the new state ministries but it will be some time before they really settle down. The gods are another matter. The unseasonal rains are said to have wrought havoc at the fag end of the rabi season, the loss being placed at anything between 1 million tonnes and 5 million tonnes of foodgrains, mostly wheat. Wheat prices are already up in most *mandis*—by as much as 50 per cent, according to some reports—and if the fever catches on, the zero inflation which the bureaucrats have been making so much noise about, will be nothing more than a whisper.

Already, company chiefs are worried about the creeping demand recession and

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ACTIVE STOCKS

Low 1982		Close 18.5.82	Change on Fort-night
11.25	Ambalal Sarabhai	13.25	1.25
44.75	Ashok Leyland	44.75	−2.75
212.50	Associated Cement	313.50	27.50
46.00	Atlas Copco	61.00	−3.00
1,325.00	Bajaj Auto	1,575.00	125.00
39.25	Ballarpur	39.25	−0.55
352.00	Baroda Rayon	382.00	19.00
33.50	Bharat Gears	33.50	−1.00
26.80	Birla Jute	30.30	0.30
53.00	Blow Plast	59.00	−0.50
66.50	Bombay Dyeing	69.50	nil
16.44	British Paints	18.19	0.25
20.20	Brooke Bond	21.60	−0.15
15.40	Calcutta Electric	15.40	nil
260.00	Calico Mills	270.00	5.00
177.50	Ceat Tyres	195.00	5.00
865.00	Century Spinning	986.00	−1.00
19.20	Chemicals & Fibres	19.20	−0.35
80.00	Colgate	101.00	4.00
41.50	Chloride India	42.00	0.50
12.60	Crescent Dyes	12.70	0.10
34.00	Delhi Cloth Mills	34.00	−1.56
18.30	Dunlop India	18.30	−0.50
16.50	East India Hotels	18.00	0.13
31.50	Elecon	31.50	−1.00
36.25	Escorts	36.87	0.37
35.75	Food Specialities	41.50	0.50
38.00	Garware Nylon	45.50	−1.25
25.40	General Electric	25.40	−0.10
31.50	Guest Keen Williams	31.60	0.10
368.00	Gujarat Fertilisers	410.00	1.00
42.20	Hindustan Aluminium	42.20	−1.40
50.00	Hindustan Lever	51.25	0.75
24.00	Hoechst Dyes	24.00	−0.25
18.60	Indian Aluminium	18.70	0.10
19.35	Indian Cable	19.35	−0.65
192.00	Indian Dyestuff	197.50	−7.50
22.00	Indian Explosives	22.30	−0.10
61.00	Indian Hotels	63.00	1.00
26.00	Indian Organic	31.00	1.00
26.20	Indian Oxygen	26.20	−0.20
125.00	Ingersoll-Rand	138.00	nil
32.50	Ion Exchange	32.50	nil
21.00	ITC	27.10	1.10
31.00	Jayshree Tea	32.25	1.25
59.00	J. K. Synthetics	61.90	−2.90
46.00	Kesoram	48.80	−1.60
115.00	Kinetic Engineering	131.00	5.00
22.00	Kothari (Madras)	22.00	−2.00
49.00	Larsen & Toubro	51.50	nil
15.25	Madura Coats	15.50	nil
44.50	Mahindra & Mahindra	44.50	−1.50
12.25	Metal Box	12.25	−0.25
26.00	Mukand Iron	27.25	−0.75
178.00	National Organic	178.00	−17.00
35.50	Nirlon	37.50	0.75
37.60	Orient Paper	37.60	−1.10
27.00	Peico Electronics	27.60	0.60
63.00	Ponds India	68.50	−2.00
303.00	Premier Auto	327.00	−5.00
21.00	Ranbaxy	26.62	1.37
34.00	Raymond	34.00	−19.25
118.00	Reliance	150.00	−8.00
28.30	Shaw Wallace	28.30	−0.70
37.50	Siemens India	37.50	−21.50
43.12	Shriram Fibres	47.62	0.18
13.00	SPIC	14.30	−0.32
22.50	Sylvania & Laxman	22.50	nil
45.50	Tata Chemicals	49.50	4.15
310.00	Tata Steel	425.00	38.00
414.00	Tata Engineering	497.00	14.00
46.40	Texmaco	48.40	−1.10
24.25	Union Carbide	24.40	nil
27.00	Usha Martin Black	27.60	0.50
228.00	Voltas	232.00	4.00
19.20	Zuari Agro	19.75	−1.25

there are fears that quite a few company balance sheets might be affected. Ashok Leyland is one of them, and so possibly is Tata Engineering. Leyland's argument is that the demand for its vehicles has not fallen off but the buyers' access to cash has been cut off and sales are affected. There are all kinds of rumours about Tata Engineering in the market but the scrip has picked up during the last few days and the management has denied any cutbacks in production. Shares of tractor companies—Escorts and Mahindra & Mahindra among them—have been badly affected, though both the companies did very well last year. Escorts has produced a bulky report which tells more about its staff than its products but the company is evidently on to a good thing, the current market situation notwithstanding.

Bad Patch: It does look, however, that the economy has struck a bad patch and investors might do well to sit out the current uncertain phase. The loss in foodgrain will almost certainly force the authorities to make it up through imports, not an easy thing to do without cutting on other, mainly industrial, imports. Companies which are more or less self-sufficient from the foreign exchange angle should do better than the others. From this angle, engineering shares should do better than chemicals or fertilisers, though companies like Hindustan Lever which have built up a highly diversified product base may not be affected.

The question is whether the corporate sector can go on like this—a credit squeeze one month, a recession next, a change in state-level government after that and so on—and yet go on. New Delhi has always been better at controlling prices and inflation than fighting recession without at the same time fuelling prices. The fact also remains that Indian companies do much better during inflation than otherwise. Even when demand is on the decline, companies think twice before cutting down prices. The only industry to come out with sizeable discounts is the refrigerator industry which is said to be spilling over with unsold machines. It seems unlikely that the corporate sector can emerge from the current crisis unscathed.

Actually, the stock markets which were somewhat upset by Pranab Mukherjee's first budget have not really settled down, despite the so-called new industrial policy and liberalisation of licensing and other controls. What use is liberalisation if you can't sell what you produce? Too much should not therefore be made of 'new' policies until the situation on the food front is clearer, and the Government makes up its mind on how to tackle it. If the kharif season proves as erratic and undependable as the rabi crop, the marketeers may as well close shop and go home, for they will have very few customers.

WORLD VALUE OF RUPEE

Country	Currency and Unit		TT Selling Rates(Rs)	TT Buying Rates(Rs)
Australia	As $	1	9.9761	9.8606
Austria	As Sch	100	57.8601	57.1627
Bahrain	Dinar	1	24.8696	24.6516
Bangladesh	Taka	100	44.2036	43.8862
Canada	Can $	1	7.6606	7.5745
Egypt	Egp £	1	11.1963	11.1159
France	Fr Frc	1	1.5674	1.5488
Hong Kong	HK $	1	1.6508	1.6325
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	1.4213	1.4111
Iran	Rial	100	11.5457	11.4628
Italy	It Lira	100	0.7276	0.7202
Japan	Jap Yen	100	.9694	3.9203
Kenya	K Shilling	1	8.9804	8.8940
Kuwait	Dinar	1	32.8034	32.5852
Malaysia	Ml $	1	4.1372	4.0877
Mauritius	Rupee	1	0.8818	0.8755
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.7032	0.6982
Netherlands	D Glds	1	3.6329	3.5936
Pakistan	Rupee	1	0.8302	0.8230
Singapore	Sing $	1	4.6735	4.4920
Spain	Sp Pt	100	9.0944	9.0055
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	0.4569	0.4476
Sweden	Sw Kr	1	1.6260	1.6058
Switzerland	Sw Frc	1	4.7341	4.6797
Tanzania	T Sch	1	1.0148	1.0075
Thailand	Baht	100	40.6210	40.2558
UK	Pound	1	16.7968	16.6458
USA	US $	1	9.4625	9.3300
UAE	Dihram	1	2.5239	2.5057
USSR	Rouble	1	13.1660	13.0715
W. Germany	DM	1	4.0772	4.0286

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo Ltd, New Delhi and quoted between the Banks on May 22, 1982.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

	Latest	Change on month
PRICES		
ET Commodity Price Index, May 18 (1969–70 = 100)	237.1	2.7
Cereals	230.9	2.4
Chemicals	278.8	−0.4
Cotton	199.7	5.8
Industrial Fibres	167.8	3.2
Sugar	218.2	2.5
Textile Yarn	221.2	1.9
Vegetable Oils	263.7	−2.4
Gold, standard, May 19 (Rs per 10 gm)	1,750.00	−5.00
Silver, May 19 (Rs per kg)	2,675.00	−5.00
SHARES		
ET Share Price Index, May 18		
(1969–70 = 100)	229.6	−9.0
Cement	143.1	5.6
Chemicals	179.1	−5.7
Engineering	374.6	−18.9
Fertilisers	186.5	−3.5
Man-made Fibres	465.0	−35.0
Paper	438.1	−18.1
Rubber Goods	135.0	−19.4
MONEY		(per cent)
Money Supply, April 16		2.5
Bank Deposits		1.6
Foreign Exchange Assets		3.1

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Administrative Office: Mangalore

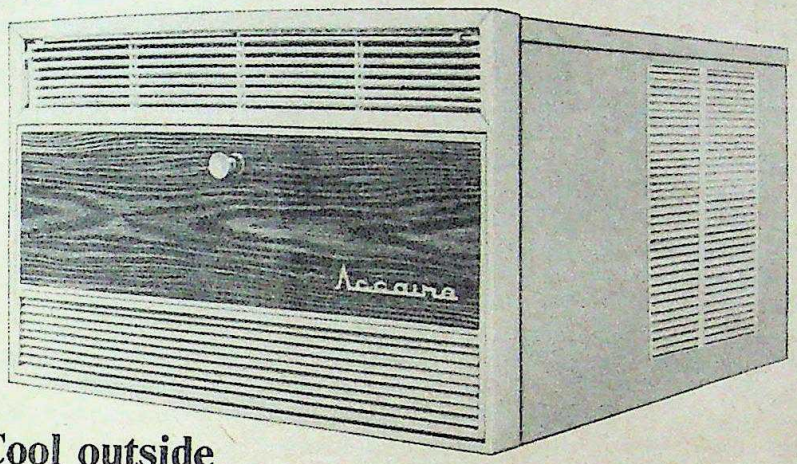
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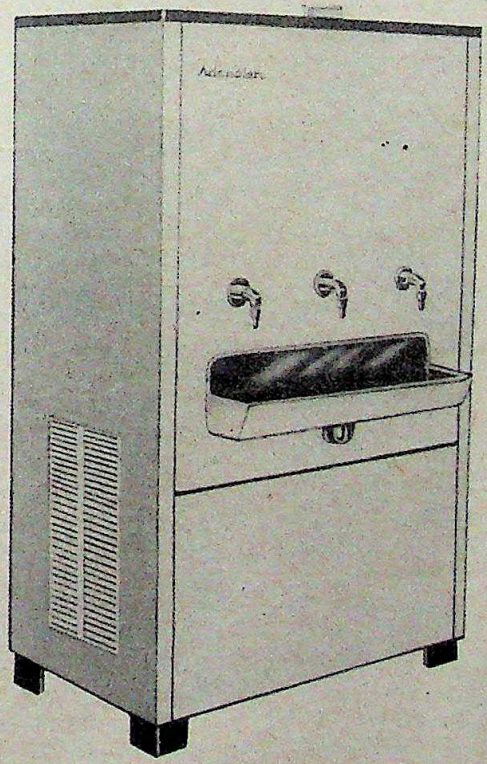
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BRITAIN/ARGENTINA

The Falkland Fall-out



WARS SELDOM turn out the way they are intended to. When, on April 2, the Argentine military junta seized the barren wind-swept Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic after 130 years of British rule, it was intended to be an act of political challenge and defiance rather than an invitation to the world's first major naval engagement since World War II. When,in less than a week, an armada of more than 50 British ships sailed from Portsmouth for the South Atlantic, it was meant to be a dramatic tableaux of Nelson going out to Trafalgar, a sombre show of Britain's naval might to back up diplomatic quests for an honourable settlement.

But no sooner had the British task force arrived in the icy waters of the South Atlantic than what was meant to be a show of strength turned into an ugly, bloody and expensive war which nobody wanted and now everybody seemed to relish. Diplomacy was doomed as soon as jingoism took over in Britain and Argentina. The British would not accept anything but Argentine withdrawal from the islands. The Argentine junta, in a roar of *de ninguna manera*—no way!—firmly held that its sovereignty over the Falklands was not negotiable. The British Government of Margaret Thatcher ordered full-scale invasion last fortnight.

Placed in the Third World, Argentina is a peculiar country. Its people are mainly of European stock, including over 100,000 Argentinians of British descent. They have seldom been on good terms with the neighbouring South American nations. The chemistry of war, however, constrained the Argentinians to dig up their Latin identity. They invoked the Rio de Janerio Treaty to ask for the support of the entire Latin community in their war against British imperialism. The South Americans split into two groups—the Spanish-speaking nations stood by Argentina without much enthusiasm, while the Caribbeans took the side of Britain. The United States, after a month's uneasy neutrality, tilted finally towards England with promise of material support, and economic sanctions against Argentina. The Monroe Doctrine died. Nobody even cared to write an obituary.

Avid Interest: Military planners round the world watched the South Atlantic war with more than normal interest. On trial in this war were high technology weapons, ships and aircraft never before used in combat. The Argentine fleet was no peer of the British armada with its better aircraft and two aircraft carriers, *Hermes* and *Invincible*. But if the Argentines could coordinate an attack using both their fleet and shore-based aircraft, they could be a formidable enemy for Britain. If they could ravage one of the British carriers, the British armada would be hard put to defend itself as well as recover the Falkland Islands defended by some 15,000 Argentine troops.

Since global military power can be projected only through naval might, the war had serious implications for all nations, big or small, with naval ambitions and naval roles. Here was a poor developing country with naval ships of very old vintage, but given the teeth of high technology weapons, taking on an industrialised power, that still possessed one of the world's most modern and finest navies. If Argentina could inflict heavy damage on the British task force, its feat would hearten many Third World countries including India. Like India, Argentina has only one carrier of ancient British vintage.

The war's first surprises—and shocks—came as soon as the British armada sailed into the South Atlantic. Violating sea an arbitrary action the British blockaded 200 miles aro Falklands. Though the commander of the task force ha instructions to use minimum force, the British torpedo second largest ship of the Argentine navy, the 13,645-ton *General Belgrano*, 36 miles outside the blockaded zone. Tw guided *Tigerfish* torpedoes hit the *Belgrano*; it went down w unsuspecting crew of 1,100 on board, of whom 800 were res This unilateral escalation aroused the British people to high-p jingoism, but alarmed Britain's West European allies wh supported Mrs Thatcher and half-heartedly imposed ec sanctions against Argentina on the clear understanding that would fight the war like a mock exercise.

Short-lived Triumph: British euphoria, however, d hours after the sinking of the *Belgrano*. An Argentine *Etendard* fighter-bomber fired a $200,000 French-built *Exoc* ship missile which set flame to the *Sheffield*, a $40 million modern British destroyer. The missile penetrated all the wa the destroyer's fire-control room before its 360-lb warhe ploded, igniting, among other things, the missile's volati pellant. The ship was gutted and at least 30 of the crew pe

The destruction of the two ships confirmed that the war South Atlantic had become, as *Time* magazine put it, "a century battle of microchips and computers, of decision reactions far too fast for the human brain to make". In fact, antecedents of this kind of battle stretch back nearly a decade. first occasion for surprise was in 1973 when a Soviet-made anti missile fired from a conventional Egyptian aircraft sank an ship in the waters of the Red Sea.

Since the late 1970s, strategic thinkers like Headley Bu been warning that exotic modern weapons—cheap and surekills—would soon change the character of "local" wars. the threshold of damage very high both for the aggressor a defender. In the last five or six years there has been a proli of extremely accurate and lethal weapons labelled precision- munitions (PGM). *The Tigerfish MK 24* torpedo used by the to sink the *Belgrano* is a typical PGM. It's 21 ft long, weigh pounds, and has a range of approximately 20 miles. "After it speeds towards its target at 58 mph, playing out thin attached to the submarine's computer and changing dire the computer dictates. When the submarine has determined torpedo is heading in the right direction, an automatic system takes over and guides the torpedo to its target." A PGM is the *Exocet* missile. It can be launched by a plane high as 33,000 ft. or as low as 300 ft. The pilot simply progr the Exocet's computer with the target's range and bearing an when the plane is between 37 and 43 miles away from it launches the missile and heads for home. "The *Exocet* drop surface and skims 8 ft or so above even the roughest wave below the speed of sound. About eight miles from tar missile's radar takes over and steers it towards the enem

Indian Concern: Indian military planners must ha about the *Exocet's* exploits in the South Atlantic wit concern. Pakistan has acquired an unknown quantity PGM's from France, evidently to be able to inflict heavy dam Indian navy ships in a future India-Pakistan naval war Arabian Sea. The Pakistan Air Force has several types of and bombers that can launch the *Exocet* missile. Indian planners, on the other hand, are highly pleased with the

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ce of Argentina's two German-made diesel submarines. ping detection by the ships of the British task force in the South ntic, it will not be surprising if these submarines hit one or more e units of the armada.

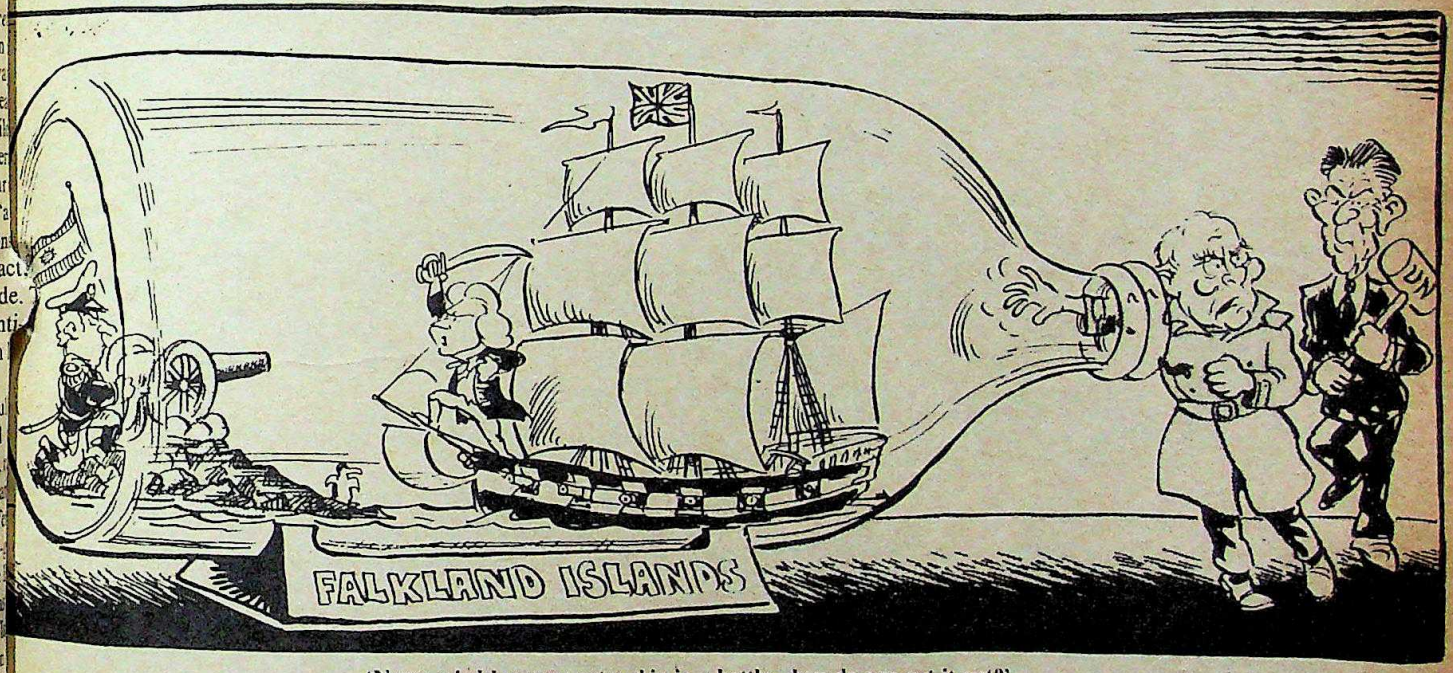
The current focus has sharpened the on-going debate in the ted States on the usefulness of large bulky super-carriers. The gan Administration has submitted a $168 billion plan to the gress to build a 900-ship navy. The immediate list includes two 00-tonne nuclear-powered super-carriers, which would bring the super-carrier fleet able to project American military power ver the globe. Opponents who favour the construction of a r number of smaller ship and submarines, cite the *Belgrano* he *Sheffield* to push their argument that flat-tops are too ble.

Of course any American super-carrier could survive hits by l *Exocet*-kind missiles. But the US navy must cope with a et force that has been bolstered by a fleet of long-range missiles, e-based bombers and sophisticated attack submarines—an al carefully designed to sink carriers. In a war of wits, nerves microchips, between conventional and nuclear submarines on ne hand and huge flat-tops guarded by cruisers and destroyers

brought hundreds of young Falangists on to the streets of Madrid shouting "Long Live Argentina". In South America and the Caribbean, half a dozen territorial claims are alive, pumping blood into the arteries of dilapidated regimes.

The political fall-out of the South Atlantic war is also going to be dark and heavy. In both Britain and Argentina, the future of political regimes has been nailed to the masts of flagships now locked in combat. If Britain cannot win a decisive victory before mid-June, when the South Atlantic will be inhospitable with the onset of winter, or if the Argentines can inflict heavy casualties on the British task force and military personnel, the groundswell of British imperial appetite will collapse, and Britain will face another Suez. An Argentine defeat, on the other hand, will probably force the ruling junta out of power. In any case, Argentina will remain deeply anti-US.

Major Setback: The ship of Ronald Reagan's hemisphere policy has sunk deep into the waters of South Atlantic. Jimmy Carter had cut off military and economic aid to Argentina as a punishment for the regime's poor human rights record. The Reagan Administration not only embraced the junta for its repressive role and its readiness to help Washington put down left-wing move-



'Never mind how you get a ship in a bottle—how do you get it out?'

e other, nobody can be certain that the carriers will win. At a gressional hearing, retiring US Admiral Hyman Rickover was how long American nuclear-powered carriers would last in -out war with the Soviet Union. His reply: "About two days."

Grave Implications: There are other grave military-political cations of the South Atlantic war which will have an impact on strategic thinking and the shape of international relations. war has demonstrated how high technology has shrunk the nces of the world's blue waters. With distance annihilated, the nble for the wealth which the seabeds promise to a world that is ly eating up its resources, takes on ominous aspects. The and islands are barren, but the waters of the South Atlantic ch in fish, with the added promise of offshore oil.

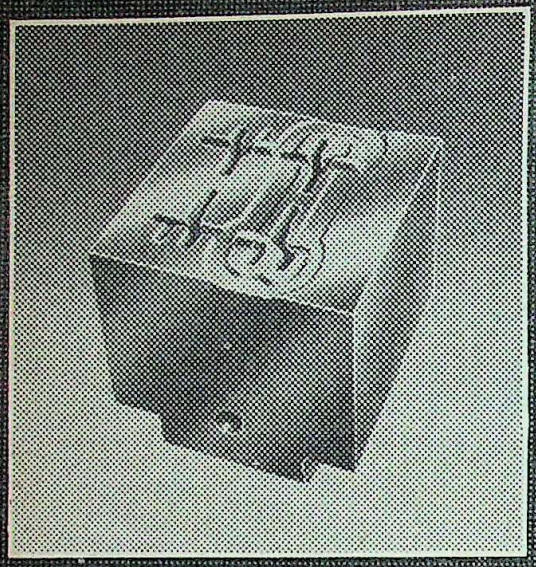
The Argentine seizure of the Falklands has also suddenly ght into focus a number of territorial disputes among nations could ignite war at any time. The ownership of Gibraltar is a ntious issue between Britain and Spain, which several rounds egotiations have failed to resolve. The Argentine action

ments and left-leaning regimes in South America, but made Argentina one of the main pillars of its hemispheric policy. The junta clearly did not expect Reagan to back Britain in what it regards as an anti-colonial war. But when it came to a choice between Argentina and Britain, an American tilt towards London was inevitable. Whoever wins or loses in the war, the Reagan Administration has suffered another major foreign policy setback, this time in its own backyard.

The Monroe Doctrine was proclaimed to keep Russia out of the western hemisphere. The South Atlantic war has given the Soviet Union unforeseen opportunity to increase its influence in Latin America. It has been helping the Argentine regime with valuable satellite-collected intelligence on the movement and location of British ships. Soviet mass media has given the war the ideological glitter of a combat between an empire shrinking back and an anti-imperialist Third World regime. Argentina is already a major supplier of grain to the Soviet Union. The relationship between the two may soon take on military aspects.

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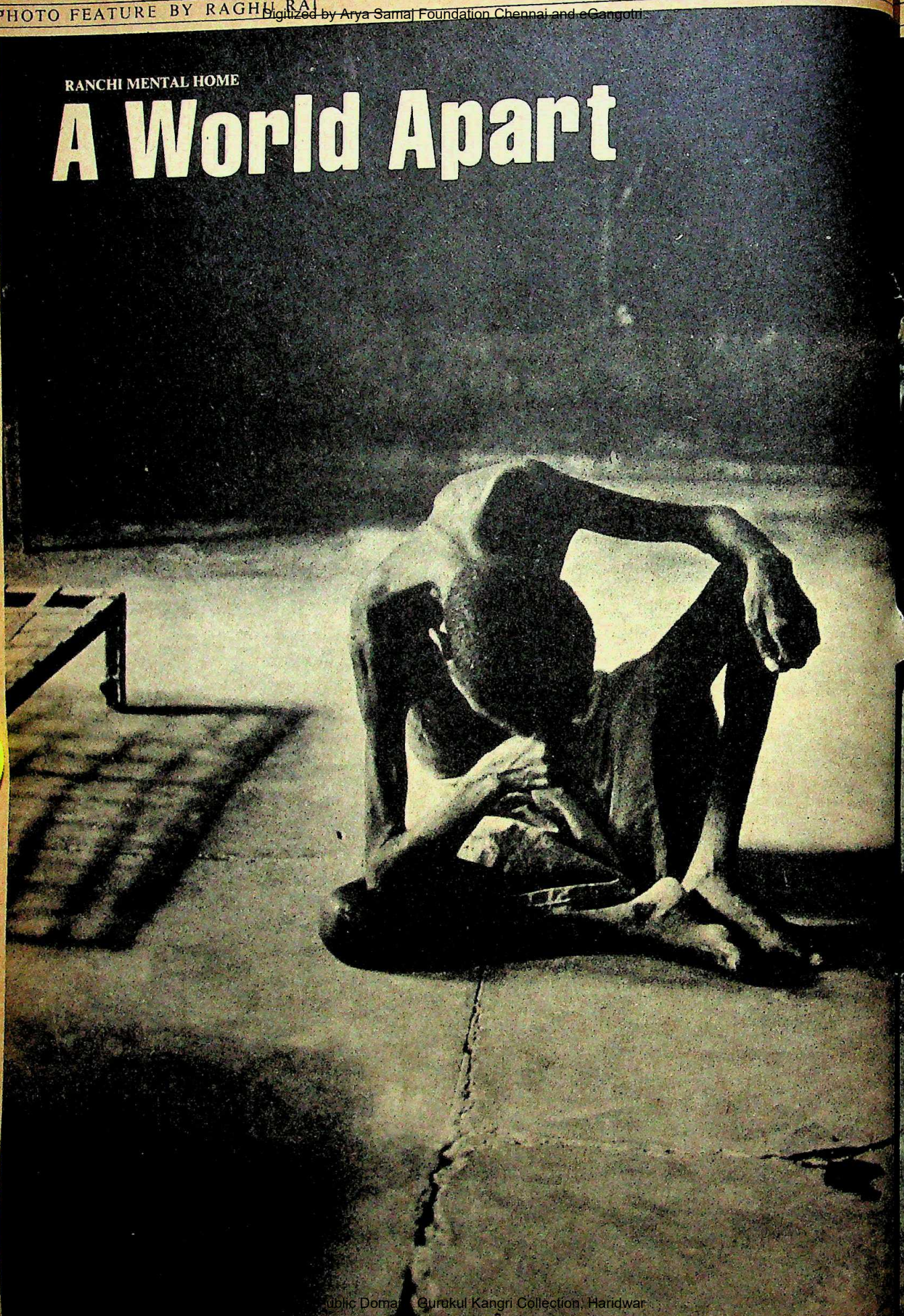
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RANCHI MENTAL HOME

A World Apart



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An inmate sits sunk in lonely despair

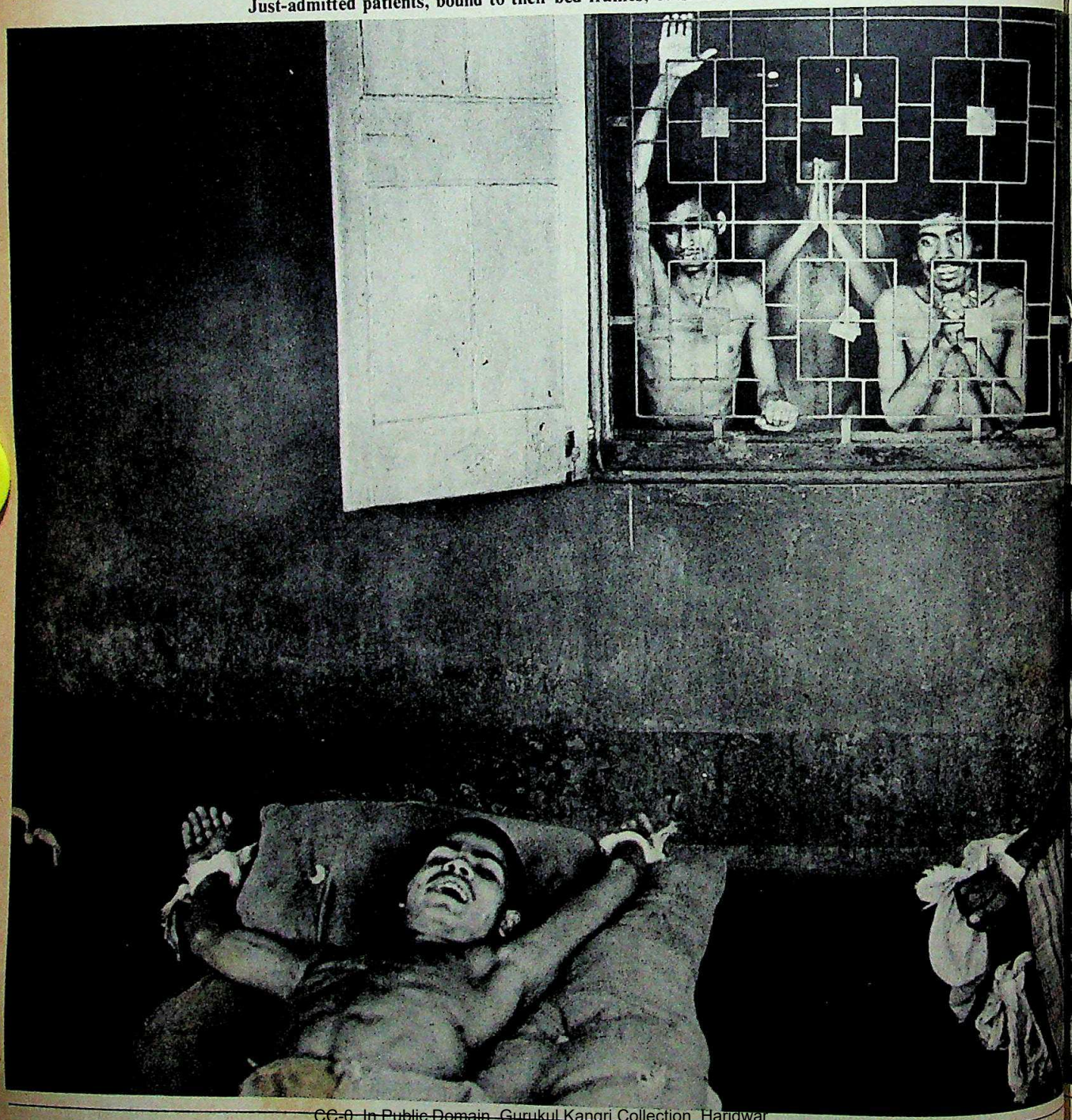
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PERHAPS the most accurate indicator of how civilised a particular society really is, is the way it treats its social rejects—particularly those who have abandoned their grip on reality and crossed the threshold into the twilight world of the mentally unbalanced. In a poor country like India, which boasts of one of the oldest civilisations in the world, the obligations towards the mentally unsound are enormous. More so, because mental illness in India is mainly confined to the dregs of society: the poorest of the poor. Confined to their own private hells, they are a forgotten breed, abandoned by their families to rot in some institution where treatment and care often only adds to their torment.

The 1,580-bed Ranchi Mansik Arogyashala (RMS) is one of Asia's largest mental hospitals. It would be unfair to call it an asylum, for that word connotes shelter, care, and protection from the callousness of the outside world. The RMS is crawling with the sights and smells and sounds of despair and madness: the sights of men and women living in conditions that make the word squalid sound respectable, the smells of uncared-for bodies living in shockingly maintained wards, and the sounds of mad song and mad talk, the primal scre[am] minds that recognise that they hav[e] consigned to oblivion.

Everything in the RMS assails the[m] and leaves them reeling with gloo[m] pessimism. The images tumble one a[fter] other like in a kaleidoscope gone hay[wire] long line of male inmates, dressed in g[rey] green tunics, mottled with age and d[irt] and khaki shorts that have gaping h[oles] them, listlessly pull water out of the a[n] large well. In the women's section ac[ross] Kanke Road, dogs and inmates eat fr[om] same plates in the verandah. At 4 p.m. [a] of patients squat patiently, mouths

Just-admitted patients, bound to their bed-frames, outside the disturbed ward



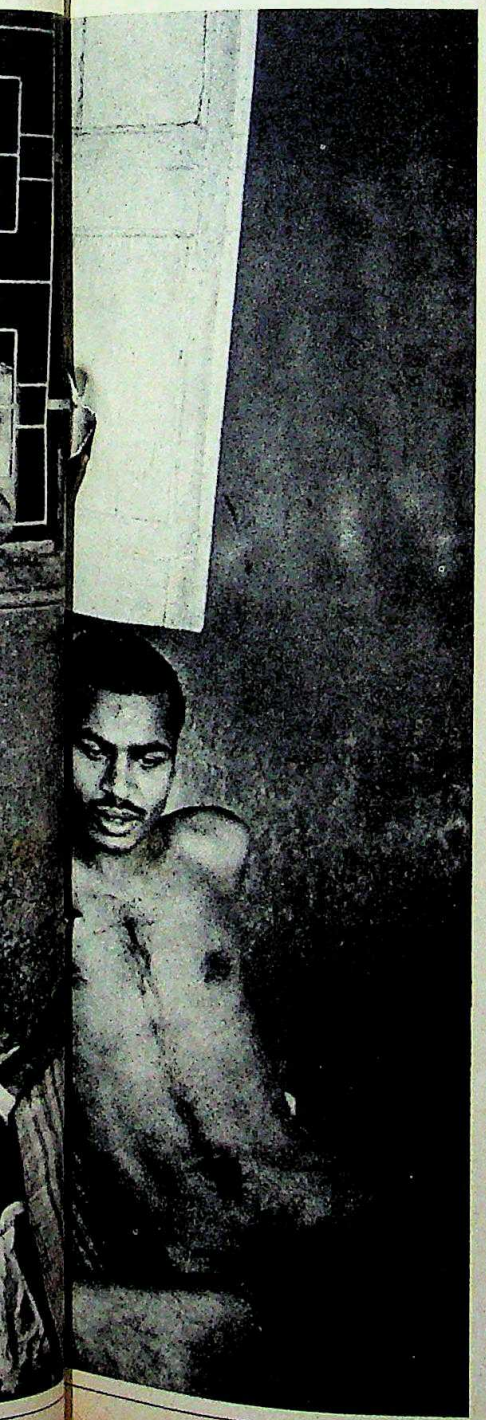
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ing for their ward sisters to pop the day's dication into their mouths. In the kit- s, thousands of *rotis* and mounds of tables litter the dirty floor, an oc- onally ravenous patient eating off the . At the Occupational Therapy centre, e men blankly unravel the threads of an blanket while another bunches them ther into tassels and weaves a thick rug ome doctor to rest his feet on. Newly- ed patients are tied hand and foot to bedsteads, and yet succeed in kicking off attempt to cover their bodies, made rd-thin by the lack of adequate food.

Uncaring Attitude: The despondency is tened by the knowledge that most of the RMS's inmates weren't born with warped minds, that the hospital's administration is trying to make the best of an impossible situation, and that the shortage of money, manpower and facilities is due solely to the uncaring attitude of the Government of Bihar, which finances the asylum.

Ranchi must house one of the largest number of mentally sick in the world. Apart from the RMS, there is the 500-bed Central Institute of Psychiatry (CIP), run by the Union Health Ministry and the 300-bed Davis



One of the wards: decay and despondency



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Institute of Neuropsychiatry (DIN), a private clinic. Ranchi's elevation and its cool climate are considered especially salubrious for the mentally ill. Both the CIP and the DIN charge fees from patients, but only 200 of the RMS's 1,580 inmates pay low fees to live in first-class and second-class wards—which are no different from the rest. The RMS has only 13 doctors and three psychiatrists for this large number, whereas the ideal is supposed to be one doctor for every 50 inmates.

Three hundred of the RMS's inmates have no beds, and equilibrium is maintained only because the 25 or 30 admissions every day are offset by an equal number of discharged patients. There is also the numbing fact that thousands of mentally sick people have been flung into prisons in Hazaribagh, Bihar, and Calcutta and Murshidabad in West Bengal. This was brought sharply to public attention on May 14, when the Supreme Court ordered the release of eight insane prisoners in Hazaribagh Central Jail.

The men and women in the RMS's segregated compounds on either side of the Kanke Road, 8 km out of the city, are not capable of worrying about their living conditions or their hygiene and clothing. They have no control over their bodily functions, and clothing is often only an impediment to be torn off. Yet, there are only 521 attendants to look after their constant needs.

Outstanding Dues: As if this were not bad enough, the Government allots only Rs 112 per patient annually—for bedding, blanket, bedsheet, pillow, mosquito net, one set of clothes, and a sweater for Ranchi's chill winters. Already, the Arogyashala's creditors in the Khadi Bhandar and other state-run supplier organisations are clamouring for settlement of Rs 5 lakh worth of outstanding dues. The pipes that supply water to the asylum are 56 years old and on the verge of disintegration. But the Ranchi Water Department refuses to change them unless it is paid water tax dues of Rs 1,08,000.

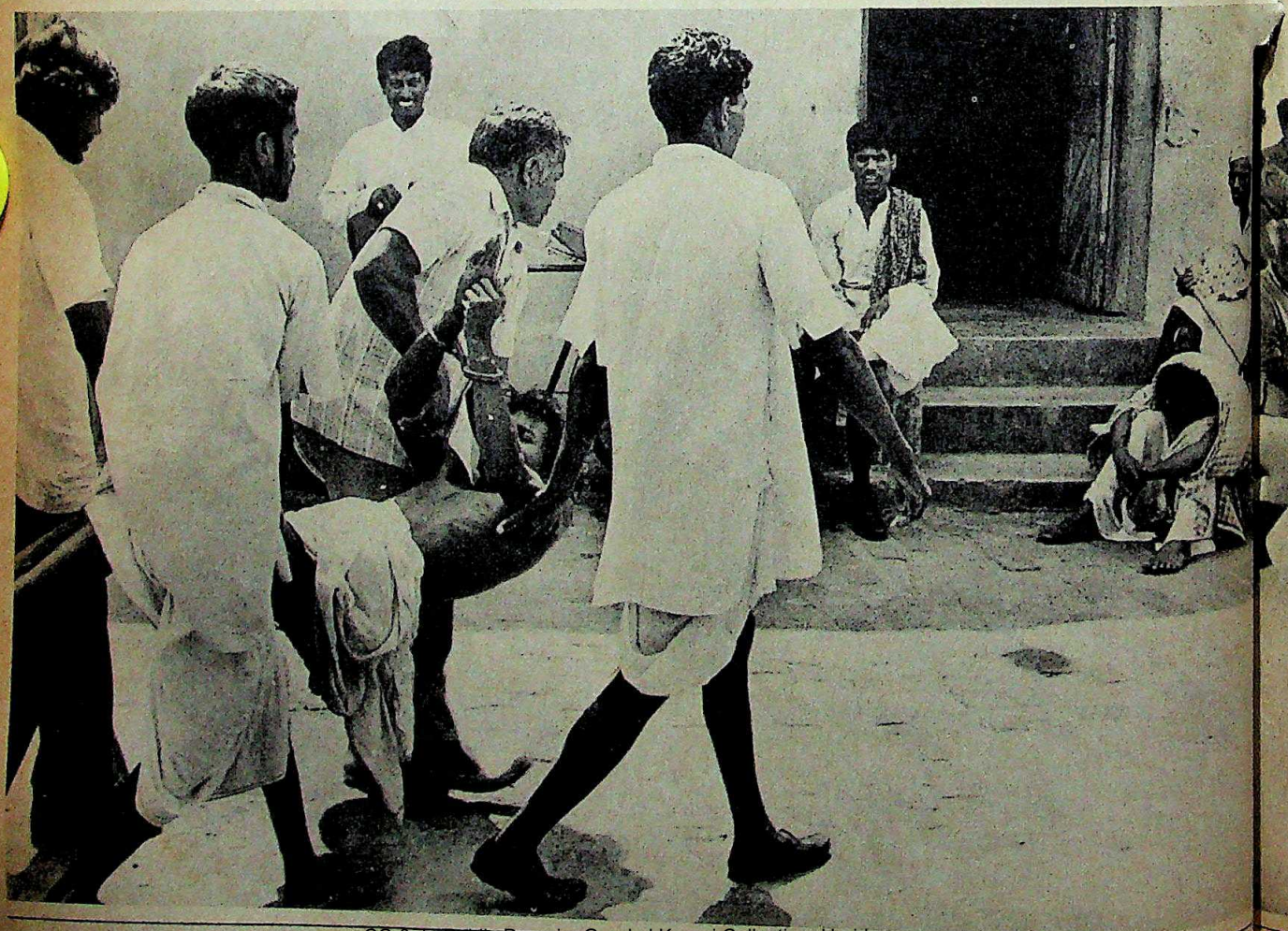
Three years back, the hospital administration begged the Government to sanction a food budget of Rs 6.25 per inmate per day, against the Rs 3 grudgingly given at present, and to increase the per head medicine allowance from Re 1 to Rs 2.50 per day. So far, there has been deafening silence from Patna.

These facts are only stanzas in the long litany of impossibilities that winds through the RMS. Its Rs 3 lakh electroencephalograph (EEG) machine, an indispensable instrument used to measure patients' brain activity, has been out of order since 1978. Nob[le] members when the hospital's X-ray [m]achine stopped working. The Rajendra [M]edical College Hospital is situated 10 km a[way] there is no ambulance to rush crit[ical] RMS inmates there. The doctors [can] specify how many patients have died [pre]maturely and agonisingly in the RMS because of [the] such basic equipment. Says Dr [S.N.] Bhagat, superintendent of the RMS: "[The] concentration camp's inmates would [be] better off than my patients."

Every mentally ill person in [India] subject to the provisions of the [Indian] Lunacy Act, 1912, an anachronistic piece of legislation that treats human beings at par with inanimate pieces of furniture. A 'mad' person can be consigned to an asylum if his family requests it, or if he is certified as mentally unbalanced by a doctor, a psychiatrist, and a magistrate. Any wanderer or destitute person deemed to be of unsound mind can be packed off to an asylum by a magistrate; so can convicts who become violent in prison.

Poor Inmates: The RMS receives patients from Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura, and almost all of them belong to the poorest of the rural [and] urban poor.

A shackled new patient is carried in kicking and screaming by relatives, while another sits (far right) in a drugged stupor



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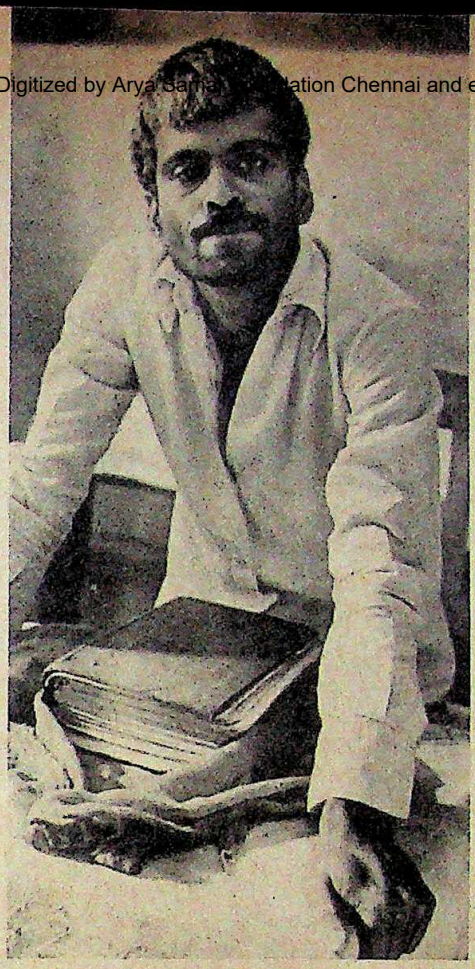
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amilies where a person suddenly loses
ntal balance and is locked up until the
est season ends and there is time to
the patient to Ranchi.
The crunch comes when the patient is to
appearances a sane person again. The
gyashala's doctors recount many cases
nmates who had to rot for years after
g certified to be sane, because their
tives would not have them back. Section
of the Indian Lunacy Act clearly states
an inmate should "not be detained in
for more than 24 hours after he has
o the person in charge of the asylum
in writing of his desire to leave such
m".
Superintendent Bhagat says that he has
cted, by way of donations from inmates'
dians, a sum of Rs 70,000 for a fund.
n it, he disburses small amounts oc-
nally to enable discharged inmates to
n home. But the stigma of mental illness
delible, and time and again, former
nts are dragged back to the RMS.

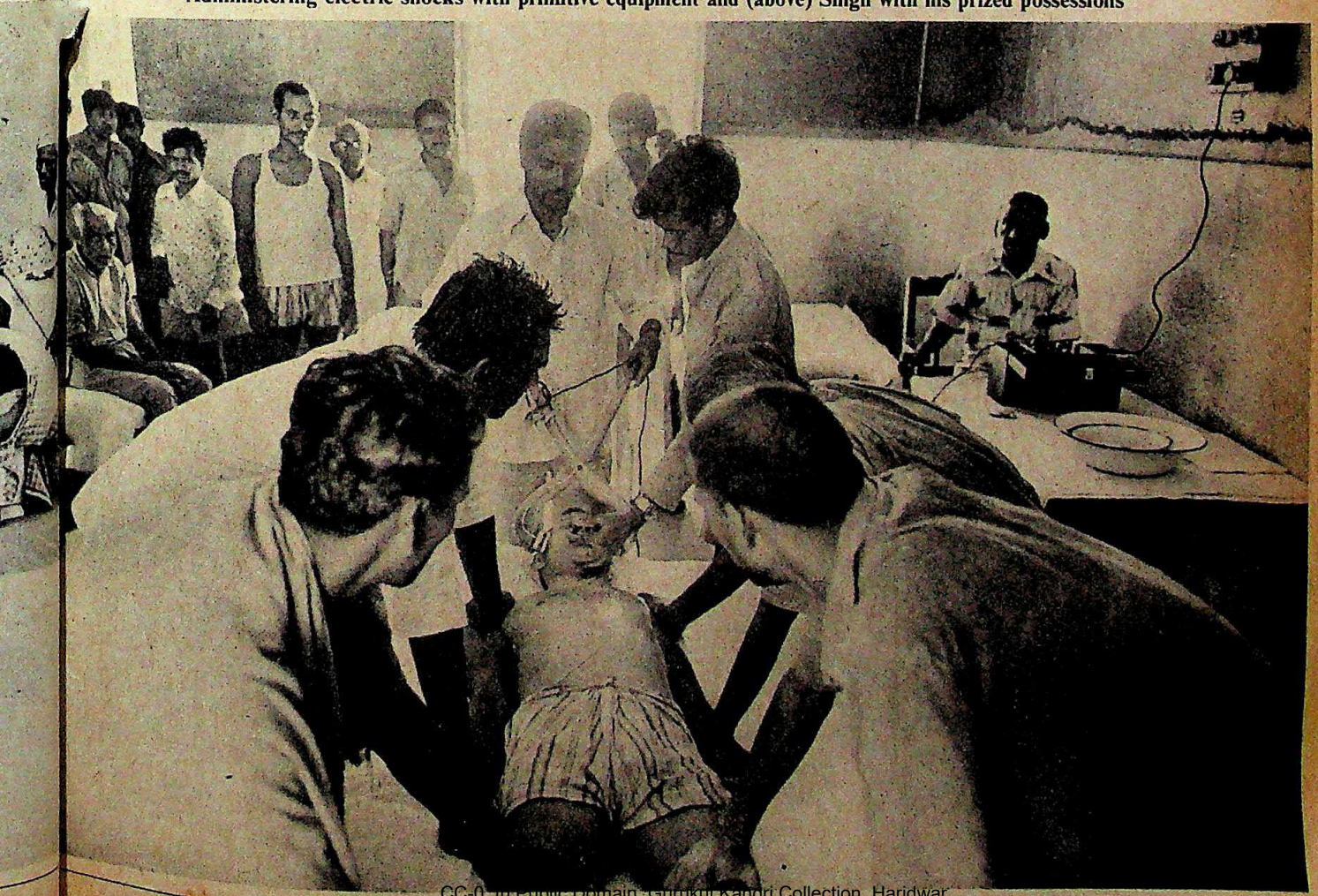
THE STAR inmate of the RMS is Dr Vashisht Narain Singh. Ten years back, Singh was a renowned mathe-
cian. Working from Seattle in the United States. Singh devised intricate mathematical formulations, taught a very popular course and wrote theses like the one on "The Aesthetics and Dynamics of Calculus". Something happened then to unhinge this brilliant mind. Singh's wife sued him for divorce, and a fellow mathematician stole one of Singh's papers and published it under his own name. Singh went over the brink.

Soon, unable to afford the costs of medical care in the US, Singh was shunted back to India. For the last six years, he has been shuttling to and from the three asylums in Ranchi. In early 1981, when he came down with an attack of pulmonary tuberculosis, the Davis Institute, where he was then housed, refused to let him go unless his bills were settled. Finally, in October, the Bihar Government had to pay up an amount of Rs 10,054—more than three years after promising to bear the expenses of rehabilitating one of its most illustrious sons.

Today, Singh lives quietly in a room at the RMS, reading religious texts and scribbling mathematical notations on scraps of paper. His brothers have been to see him and have left a testimonial saying he has improved vastly, but Singh's family in Arrah district has no financial resources to pay for



Administering electric shocks with primitive equipment and (above) Singh with his prized possessions



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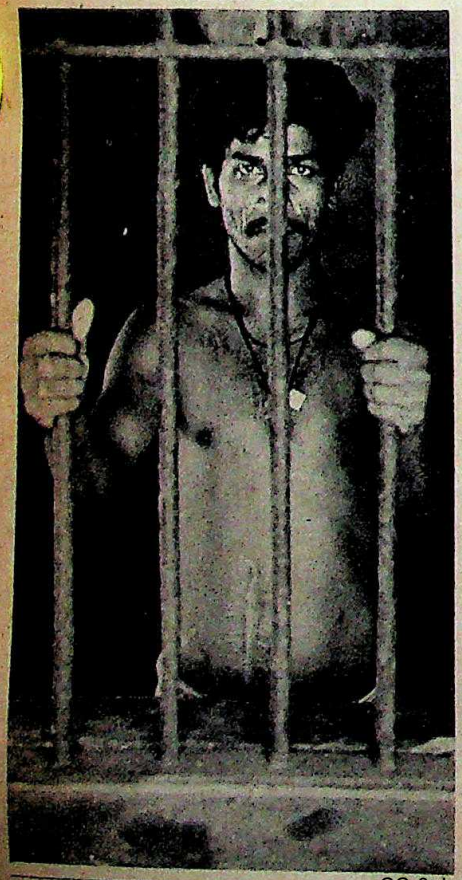
care that would lift him out of this slough of despondency.

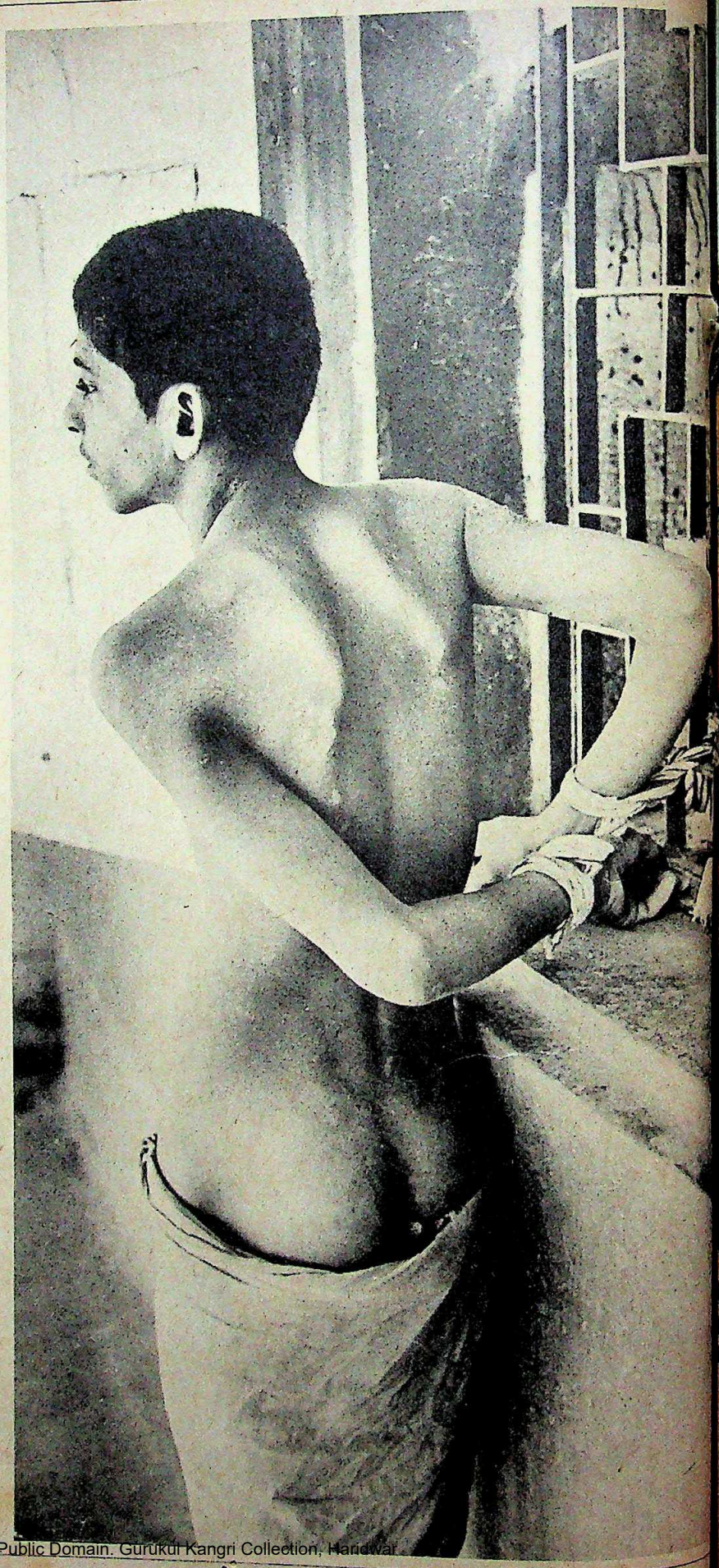
Nine thousand people pass through the RMS every year, and they are the luckier of the lot. There was Dulal Chandra Das, for instance, who was admitted in December 1957. The government-appointed Visitors' Board of the RMS certifed him sane in May and August of 1963—and then forgot all about him. Das's relatives in Calcutta, too, refused to acknowledge his existence, and all the superintendent could do was to write repeatedly to them to ask for Das's return home. Twenty-one years after he entered the RMS and 15 after he regained sanity, Das was taken away in October 1978 by his reluctant elder brother Kartik Chandra Das.

Old-timers: There are some old-timers in the RMS who have been living in its wards now for more than 30 years. Some of them talk with amazing lucidity, and all are firmly attached to the asylum's environs. One old man, collecting sticks aimlessly, is engaged by a doctor in a long argument, throughout which the patient refuses to divulge his name. "I have no name," he shouts in impeccable English, "call me whatever you like." But suddenly, in a moment of anger, he flares up and says: "My name is not Samarendra. That is only illusionary."

Not so illusionary is Tippu Sultan, a

Tippu Sultan in his isolation cell (below) and a new admission, tied securely to a window, waits for a bed





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It'll mean more to you with every passing year



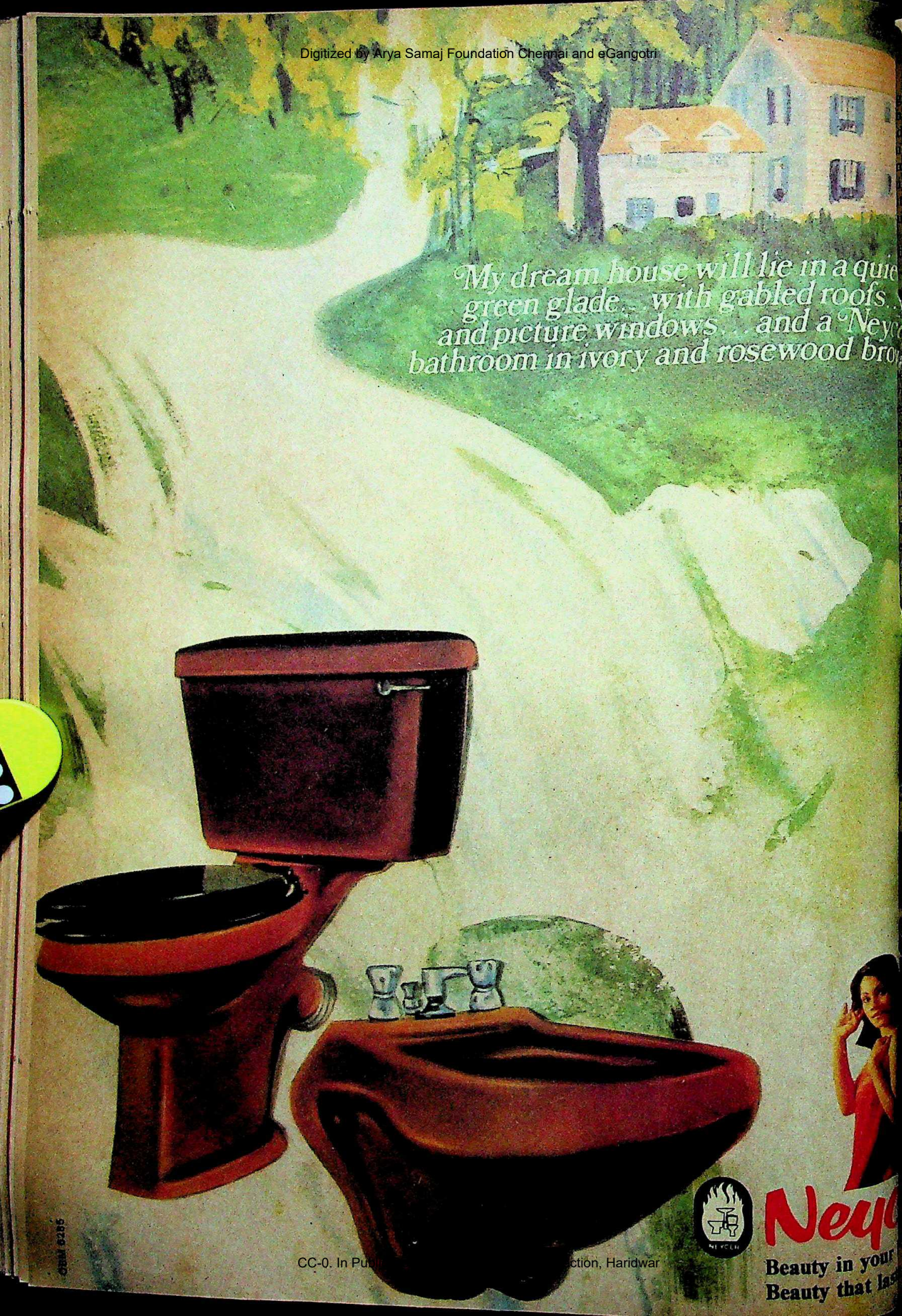
ENFIELD

MINI BULLET

Bullet blood runs in it.

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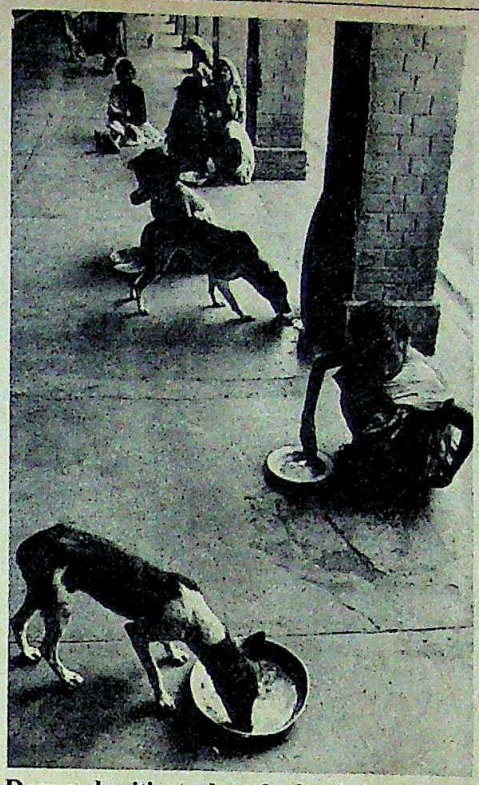
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h-looking young man of 24, who has put into an isolation cell with barred ows. The ward attendants are mortally d of him, but he describes his story in a al tone, strutting around his cell and ng the livid scars on his stomach and . His father, says Sultan, had him tted into the RMS because he was indulgin too much "bossgiri" and knifeing. The scars are reminders of a gang "I compromised with my enemies," he "but they waylaid and stabbed me o death on a Jamshedpur *maidan*."

ere are other inmates, more educated e rest, who help nurses and doctors in ing difficult patients. Shatrughan d Gupta, a lawyer from Janakpur, des a friendly shoulder for other ins to cry upon. Another exemplary in- is Bimal Kumar Biswas, who until tly ran a lucrative medical practice in hi. Biswas descended from alcoholism madness after his brother began living uously with his sister.

The women's section is heart-rending, Dr D.K. Ghosh, the assistant superint in charge, is mobbed on his rounds omen imploring him to write to their es to take them away. These women bviously tugged by memories of their children and families. But unlike the men, who can at least be bread-winners, the women are left to the RMS's mercies for years after they have returned to normalcy.

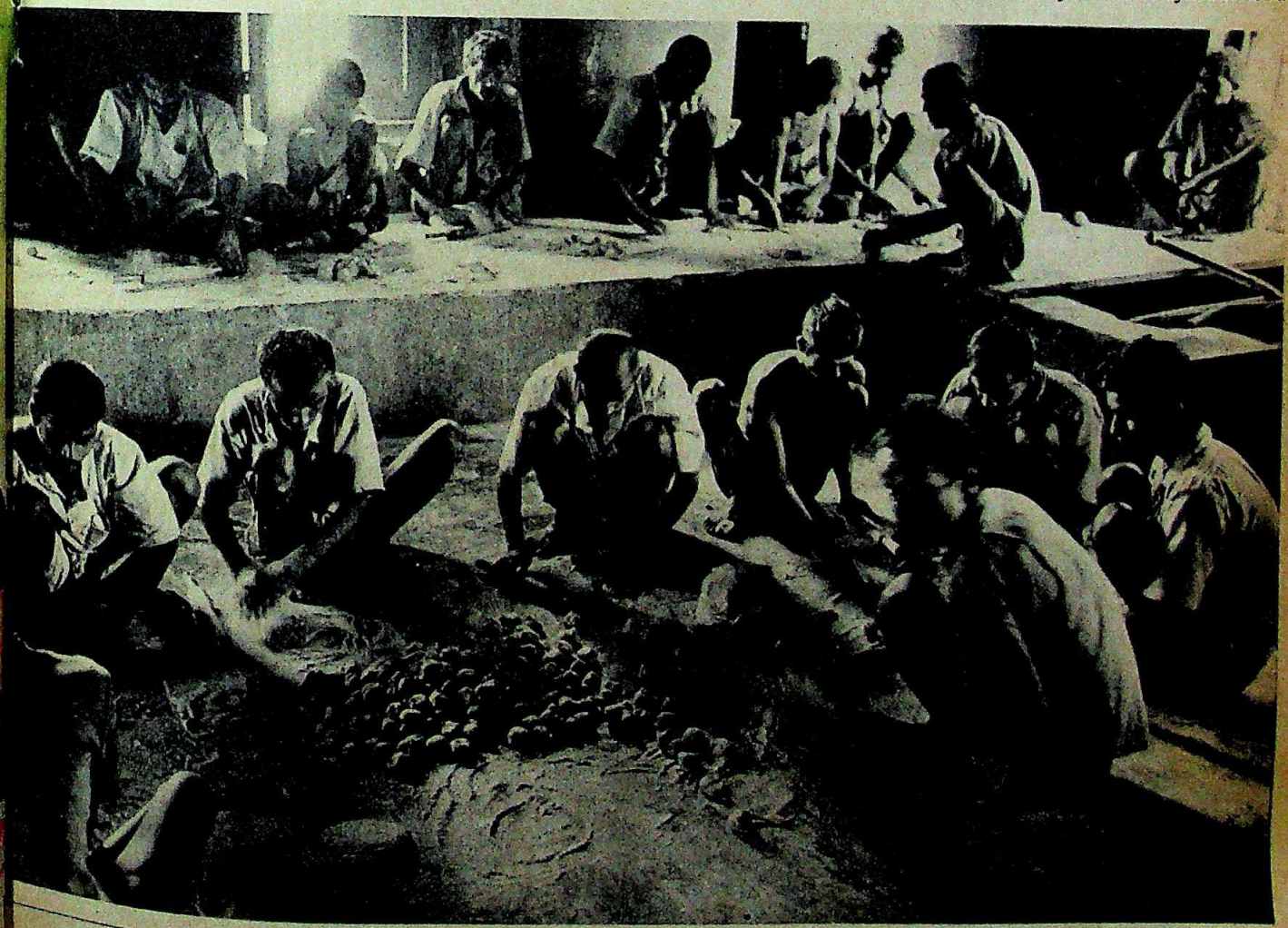


Dogs and paitients share food and plates in the women's section and (below) *rotis* being rolled out on the filthy kitchen floor

The reality of the Arogyashala is dehumanising; it produces a helpless anger at the manner in which these wandering minds have been forgotten. Working for years in such an environment, some of the RMS's doctors are themselves hovering on the edge of madness, and privately admit that they are swallowing tranquillisers every day to soothe their jangled nerves.

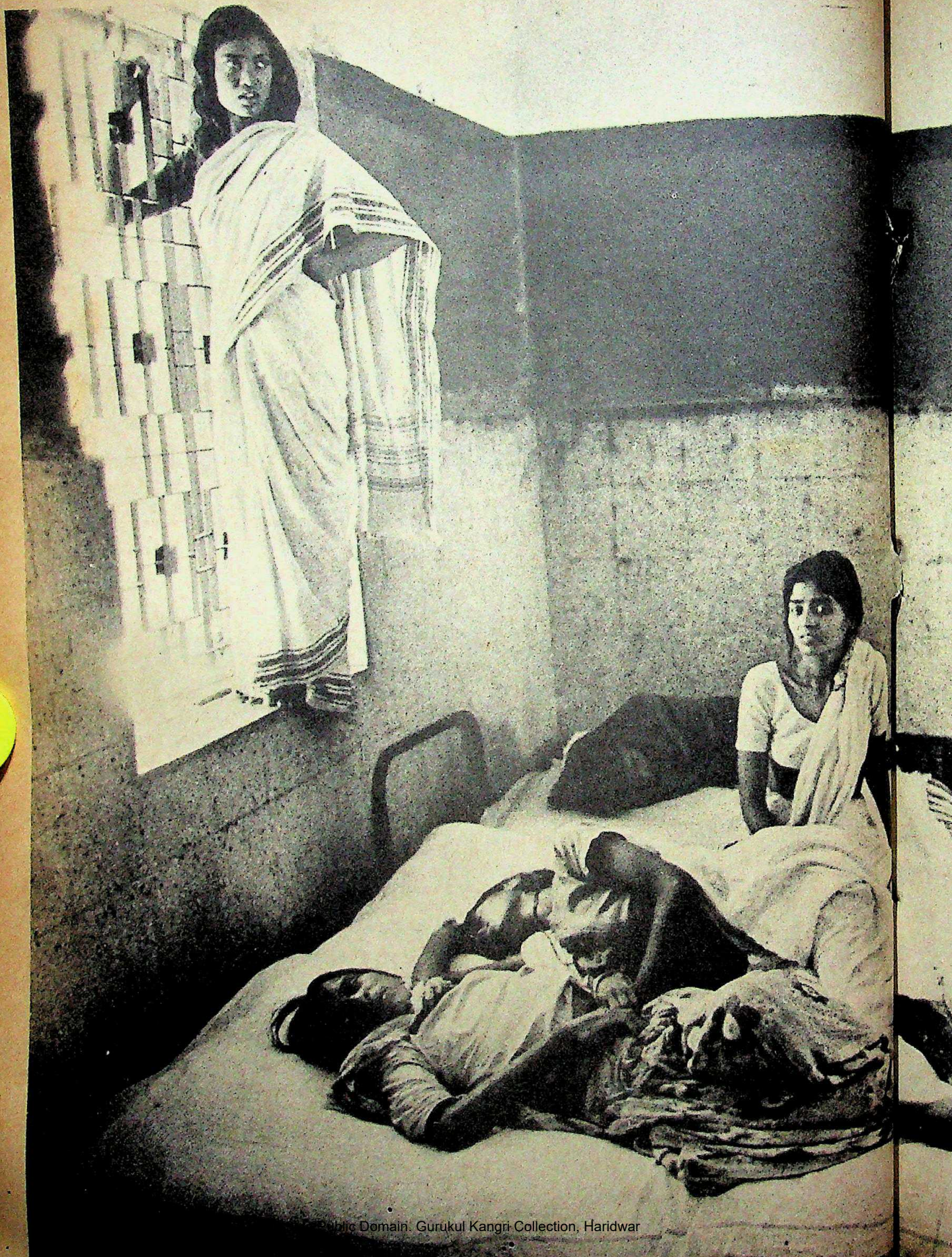
One of the most nerve-racking of their duties is to subject inmate to Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT) in the asylum's "shock shop". There, inmates are held down by a cluster of attendants while a pincer-like instrument dating from the 1930s is clamped on either side of their heads. A current of 110 volts is then rammed through their skulls for half a second—a split second in which enzymes coagulate and brain cells die and the patient rears up in an involuntary convulsion.

Ultimately, RMS doctors console themselves with the rationale that their patients are better off inside the asylum than outside—where they would probably starve to death. But that very rationale symbolises a



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Residents of the worst cases ward in the women's section



society that is in fact decaying. The real heroes of the Arogyashala are the patients who have regained enough sanity to be discharged, for, alone and unaided, they have succeeded in groping their way out of this grey world with no windows to let the light in.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG

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BHEL

Suppressing Dissent?

EVERY dissenter is in a minority of one, and K. Ashok Rao, 36, deputy manager in Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), is discovering what it is like to take on this public sector leviathan. Rao is, after all, only one of BHEL's 70,000 employees.

Yet, on February 23 this year, Rao filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court that could shake BHEL to its foundations. The petition challenged Rule 9 of the corporation's Conduct, Discipline and Appeal Rules, 1975, which prohibits employees from publicly airing their grievances or criticism.

Sensitive Matter: The petition stemmed from BHEL's refusal to allow Rao to publish a pamphlet titled '*The Peacock's Ugly Legs*'. On May 25 last year, Rao wrote to BHEL's Chairman and Managing Director K.L. Puri, asking for permission to publish the pamphlet, a critique of another booklet written by a former BHEL chief S.V.S. Raghavan titled '*Blueprint Of A Corporate Plan With Reference To* BHEL'. Nine days later, the management wrote back to Rao, saying the matter was sensitive and needed 'deep study.' On August 1, Rao served notice on the management, threatening to publish the pamphlet if he did not hear their objections within a fortnight. The matter ostensibly ended two days before the deadline expired, when a general manager B.B. Bharadwaj wrote and informed Rao that he was not to publish the pamphlet, and would invite disciplinary action if he did.

A former director (Finance) who lasted hardly six months as chairman and managing director in 1978, Raghavan co-authored BHEL's ambitious Corporate Plan in 1974—an exercise that was touted as the catalyst that would transform the corporation from a manufacturing to an engineering organisation, usher in 'renationalisation' of production, and brought about certain organisational changes. Chief among the aims of the Plan was to upgrade research and development (R & D) activities "in such a way as to reduce dependence on foreign technologies and keep the industry continually updated".

His plan was effectively shelved in 1978 when BHEL signed a memorandum of understanding with Siemens AG of West Germany with the ultimate aim of concluding a broad-based umbrella collaboration over a period of 25 years that would account for more than two-thirds of BHEL's manufacturing spectrum. The BHEL-Siemens deal stirred up a tremendous storm of protest, and after a committee of four senior secretaries to the Government came out against it, in June 1979, the then prime minister Morarji Desai scuttled the proposal.

Blueprint: Ironically, Raghavan was forced to quit BHEL's top post in August 1978 because of his opposition to the Siemens deal. The booklet being attacked by Rao contains Raghavan's blueprint for a second corporate plan. When he wrote it, Raghavan was working with Ashok Leyland in Madras.

Rao in his pamphlet, argues that there has been a total collapse of engineering and accountability in BHEL, denigration of R & D, indiscriminate import of technology, and demoralisation of the corporation's executive cadre. Says Rao; "Today, [illegible] brella deal with Siemens has been [illegible] by piecemeal agreements that are just [illegible] The collaborations now cover many [illegible] of all turbines from zero to 1,000 mega [illegible] (MW), all ratings of motors, both [illegible] DC, all industrial controls, and all switch [illegible] items and condensers. What does that [illegible]

Rao has been a thorn in BHEL [illegible] for other reasons too. In January [illegible] formed the BHEL Executives' Associa [illegible] Delhi to take up the managerial [illegible] grievances. The management panicked [illegible] formed its own body, the BHEL Execu [illegible] Forum, eight days later.

Because of his dissensions Rao [illegible] has been relegated to the head of the [illegible] division, and his duties now include [illegible] tionery purchases, whitewashing, [illegible] ture, and maintenance of lifts, water [illegible] and air-conditioners.

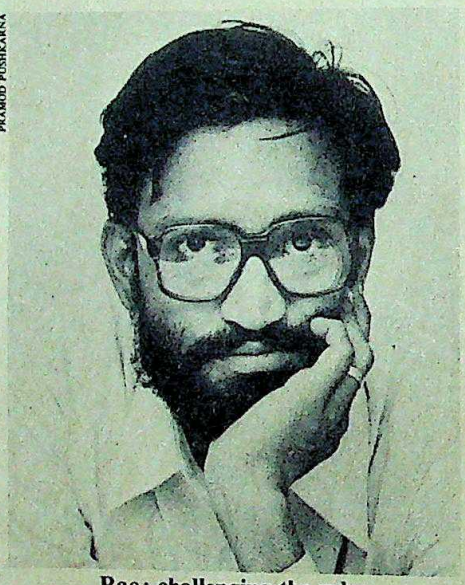
Significance: Rao's petition [illegible] Supreme Court acquires such signi [illegible] because a favourable decision could [illegible] way for public dissent by employees [illegible] the country's public sector and [illegible] governmental organisations. The C [illegible] vice Conduct Rules, for instance, [illegible] similar rules forbidding the expres [illegible] criticism. Bodies like the Council for [illegible] tific and Industrial Research (CSIR), [illegible] Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), [illegible] Indian Council of Agricultural Re [illegible] (ICAR), and the Indian Council of [illegible] Research (ICMR) similarly gag any em [illegible] protest; so do academic bodies [illegible] Indian Institute of Technology. One [illegible] that even constructive criticism get [illegible]

Puri told INDIA TODAY that he [illegible] welcomed "constructive suggestions" [illegible] R.N. Srivastava, BHEL's director of [illegible] nel: "Similar conduct rules exist [illegible] Government. We can discuss things [illegible] nally, not in public." Unlike Rao, R [illegible] was not on the BHEL staff when he w [illegible] booklet.

BHEL's top brass is understa [illegible] nervous about Rao's case in the S [illegible] Court. Rao has argued that his book [illegible] pegged on Raghavan's, and his sources [illegible] standard reference libraries, pu [illegible] reports on BHEL and annual reports [illegible] corporation.

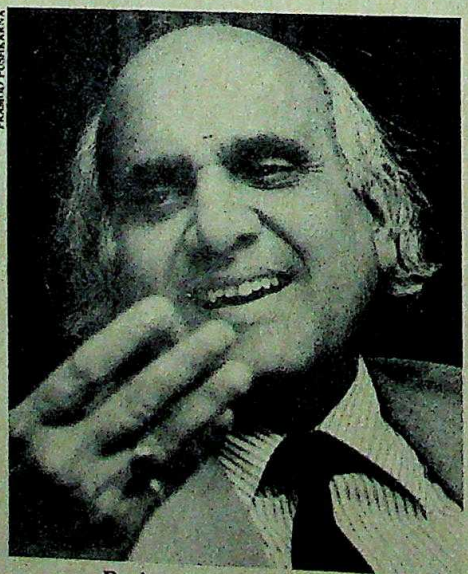
"Basically, I'd like to think [illegible] socially conscious engineer," say [illegible] whose father Dr K.L. Rao was once [illegible] irrigation and power minister. "I am [illegible] for the corporation's benefit, not de [illegible] it. I'm saying we should import tec [illegible] selectively, I don't say that self [illegible] implies buying everything from [illegible] Bhandar. How is it that even a P [illegible] can criticise BHEL but not one of [illegible] informed employees?"

—CHAITANYA



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Rao: challenging the rules



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Puri: nervous anticipation

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RAT

ily Crooks

TWO HUNDRED oil-wells litter Mehsana district in Gujarat. Mehsana town, 65 km from the state l Ahmedabad, is the base for the men e Oil and Natural Gas Commission C). Lately, ONGC personnel have pro- other than leaking pipes and obdurate the Mehsana oilfields have become unting grounds for oil thieves who wells and the pipes that carry it to the ries.

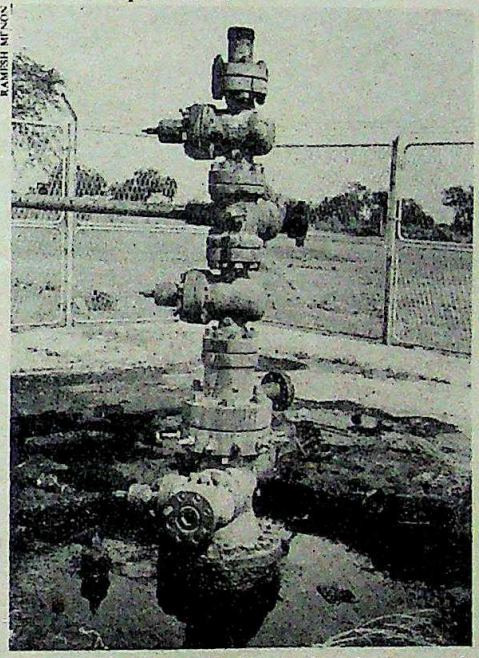
The extent of the thefts is difficult to tain, as there is no way the loss from oil- can be measured. However, sources in ana estimate that it runs into several of rupees. As realisation grew in the leum Ministry that the country's pre- oil wealth was being siphoned off, ls sat up and took notice. Said a try official: "We are viewing it seriously poses a threat that if not stopped now spread to all the 3,000 wells in the ry."

The oil thieves were themselves re- ible for giving notice of their presence. ther lame-brained bid to conceal the e, they had started to set the spilled ire, threatening the wells. So far, no has been reported destroyed as a of such fires, 10 of which have taken at various ONGC installations in ana in the last two years.

Little Security: Intelligence sources the happenings as sabotage but the do not support this view. Said Gurdial , district superintendent of police, ana: "Oil thieves will not set fire to : that would damage their business." ntelligence official retorts: "It just does make sense. Why should they try to burn oil spills? It will only attract attention, more security arrangements. As it is, ing of the pipelines is virtually non- ent."

ne notable success scored by the law- was the arrest of Asraf Bhai, an ONGC , on April 25. This led to the arrest of en while they were siphoning oil into a te tanker, Asraf having been paid Rs to look the other way. If undisturbed, hieves, by simply opening the manually ated valve of the well with a spanner, d have siphoned off 10,000 litres of costing over Rs 20,000 in 20 minutes. The local police also appear to have stained with crude. A year ago, M.V. a sub-inspector, was caught red- ed when he was bringing a crane to tow a tanker full of stolen crude. Earlier, ers had watched him putting his shoul- der to the tanker stuck in slush, after which he had rushed to Ahmedabad from Kalol. Unfortunately for the enterprising sub-inspector, a reception committee of ONGC officials and police took him into custody and he was subsequently suspended.

Meagre Resources: The pilferage however, continues and Gurdial Singh is at his wits' end, complaining about the lack of "adequate manpower" and equipment. At the moment he has to make do with two wireless sets, two camels, six horses and about a dozen men to police an area which ONGC officials think would need at least 1,200 men for adequate security, with an expenditure of Rs 30 lakh. ONGC appears to have washed its hands off the security problem; says Project Manager R.M. Kochar: "It is not our job to police. We are only concerned with oil exploration."



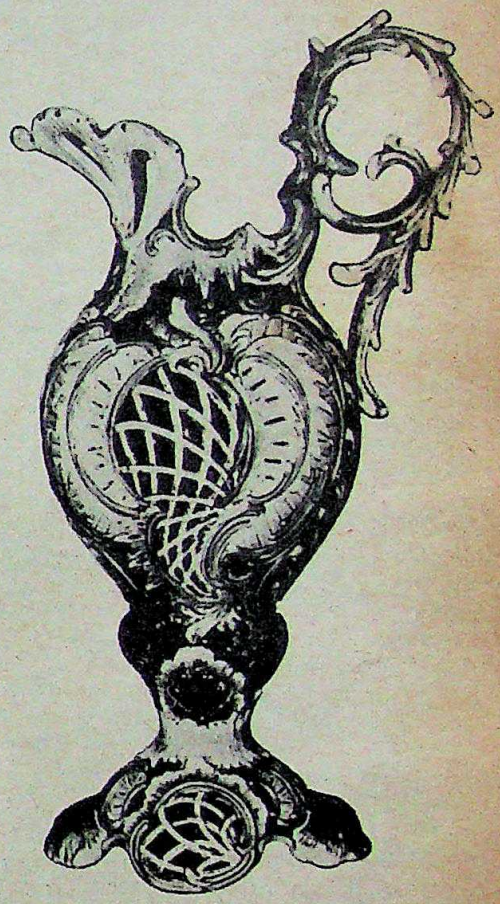
A Mehsana oil-well: happy hunting ground

The police have decided to concentrate their forces and are checking the movements of tankers in the night. The tally so far this year is 14 registered cases of oil thefts, 57 people arrested, and seven vehicles impounded. In the last two years, 44 thefts have been registered. Both police and ONGC sources agree that not even 5 per cent of the thefts are registered.

The Petroleum Ministry has now asked state government officials to assess the situation and file a detailed report. The Government is seriously considering giving the job to the Territorial Army, because they feel that the unarmed Central Industrial Security Force would be no match for the oil thieves. As an ONGC official puts it: "The oil will be stolen as long as palms can be greased."

—ASOKA RAINA with RAMESH MENON in Mehsana

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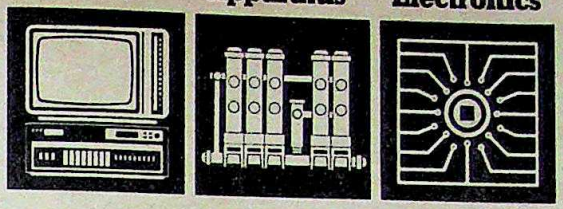
GOODYEAR

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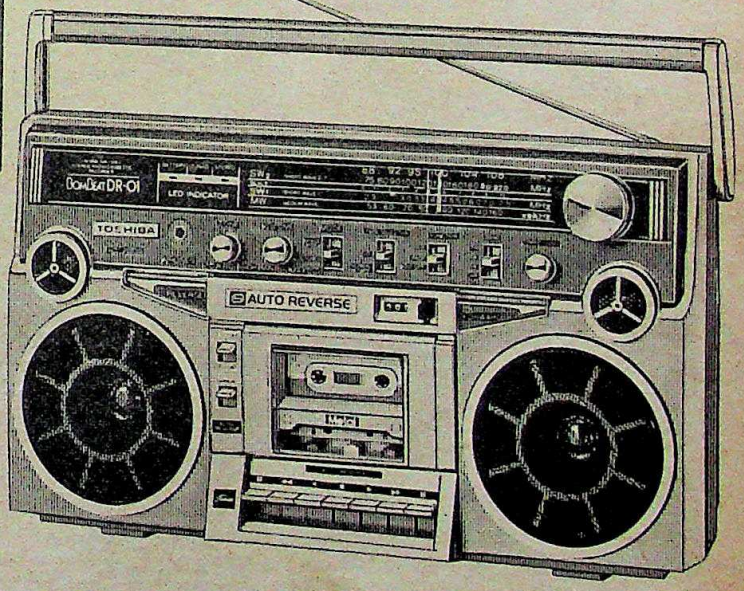
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TRANS-HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION

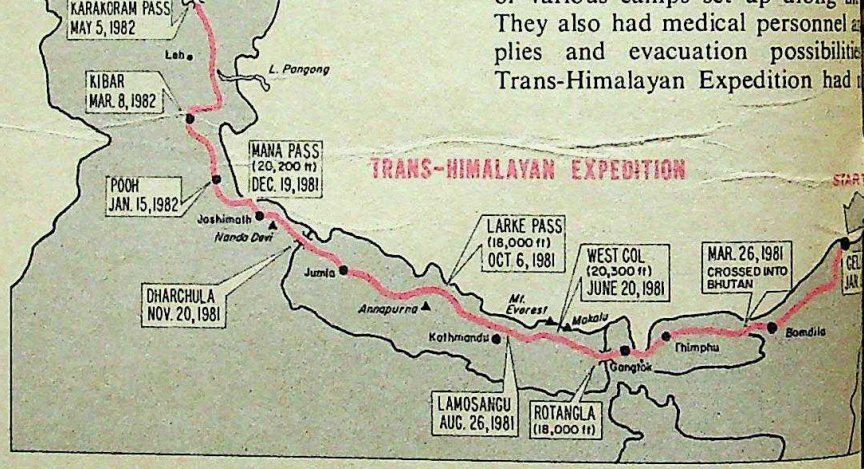
The Long March

NO OTHER mountain range has posed greater challenges to human endeavour than the towering Himalayas. Ever since Sir Edmund Hilary's laconic observation that he went after Everest because "it was there", the Himalayas have been stormed from every possible angle and in every conceivable manner. Nothing, it appeared, was left to accomplish, till four gutsy men of the Indian Army proved everybody wrong. In an incredible feat of courage, determination and tenacity, the expedition last month became the first humans to traverse the forbidding Himalayan range. It was a battle that started on the Indo-Tibetan border on New Year's Day, 1980 in the thick, impenetrable jungles of Arunachal Pradesh in easternmost India and ended 475 days later on the barren, wind-swept heights of the Karakoram Pass in Ladakh in the west. It covered 8,000 kilometres of the most hazardous and forbidding country imaginable. No Himalayan expedition had survived for so long and accomplished so much.

Last fortnight, when the four intrepid adventurers arrived in the capital, shaggy-haired and sunburnt, to a hero's welcome, it was the least they deserved. In that 15-and-a-half-month struggle, the Trans-Himalayan Expedition flirted with death almost constantly. They were buried in an avalanche, went without food for days, survived snowstorms, blizzards, deadly snakes and collapsing ice and braved two Himalayan winters. In the bargain, they went through four sets of complete equipment, including sleeping bags, rucksacks and a tent, as well as eight pairs of trekking shoes each. They also, above all, traversed areas where no human being had set foot before.

Oddly enough, for that very reason, the expedition almost failed before it had even started. The brainchild of Lt-Colonel S.S. Singh, a well-known mountaineer, the idea of trekking across the entire Himalayan range was initially brushed aside by officialdom as a hare-brained scheme. Only one man, Lt-General Sethna, the vice-chief of army staff, saw the possibilities of success and shepherded the scheme along. Against the advice of even expert mountaineers, who labelled it "a stupid idea", he asked Singh to select his team and make the basic preparations. The team really selected itself.

Selected Team: The leader was Captain H.C. Kohli, 28, who has been climbing since boyhood and perfected the art at the High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) of the army. He was the logistics officer with the army expedition that climbed Kanchenjunga led by Colonel "Bull" Kumar. The deputy leader was Captain H. Chauhan, 30, a young mountaineering enthusiast who made up for his relative lack of experience with guts and ability. The most experienced member of the team was Naik N.D. Sherpa, 32, the most highly-decorated NCO (non commissioned officer) in the Army, a gold medal winner from the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), the first Indian to have climbed Sickle Moon peak in Himachal, the first man to have climbed Kanchenjunga from the south-west face and a member of the 1964 pre-Everest expedition. Though the juniormost in terms of rank, Sherpa's word on difficult parts of the trip was final. The last member of the team was Naik Subedar Nar Bahadur Gurung, 35, the team's skiing expert and an instructor at HAWS.



In June 1980, the team started making its preparations and putting the logistics involved onto paper. It was an awesome task but not an insurmountable one once it was down in black and white. By December 1980, the expedition project was finalised and it was put up before the then chief of army staff, General O.P. Malhotra. Malhotra liked the plan and gave them the green signal on December 20, without hesitation. "Suddenly, reality dawned and we realised we were really going to do it," says Singh, "till then we had gone through the motions without really believing it would get off the ground."

There was, however, one hitch; one major challenge before they even started. Malhotra insisted that the expedition must kick off in 1980—11 days aw worked round the clock for those recalls Singh, "we were determ nothing should stop the exp Finally, on December 31, in a poign ceremony in Malhotra's office, was assembled and handed over th staff's personal flag which they pledged to plant in the Karakoram

Flown to the Eastern Sector, took off on their long march from an obscure hamlet on the Indo-Tibe der on January 15, 1981. "The ma blem was logistics," admits Singh, "the dition had to be planned in the Alpine which means that individuals were their own clothing, equipment and That, however, was not as easy as it s No Himalayan expedition had spe than three or at the most four month Himalayas. Again, previous Himal peditions had the advantage of she porters to carry the major share equipment as well as the benefit and of various camps set up along th They also had medical personnel a plies and evacuation possibilities Trans-Himalayan Expedition had

these. To keep their load down minimum, they cut down on food depending on tribals, shepherds and tain villages along the way to replen rations, a dangerous dependence at

Poor First-aid: The four m undertaken a crash course in first-aid serious illness or injury to any one would have meant abandoning ex since four was the absolute minim quired for a trip of this nature. In fac occasion when Gurung complain headache he was given anti-dysen which speaks volumes for the medi petence of the members. The grea nger, however, lay in the minimal ch evacuation if any of them had serious injuries. Lack of communica worst weather in the Himalayas decades and the inaccessible nat major portion of their route m cuation almost impossible.

Ironically enough, the first m

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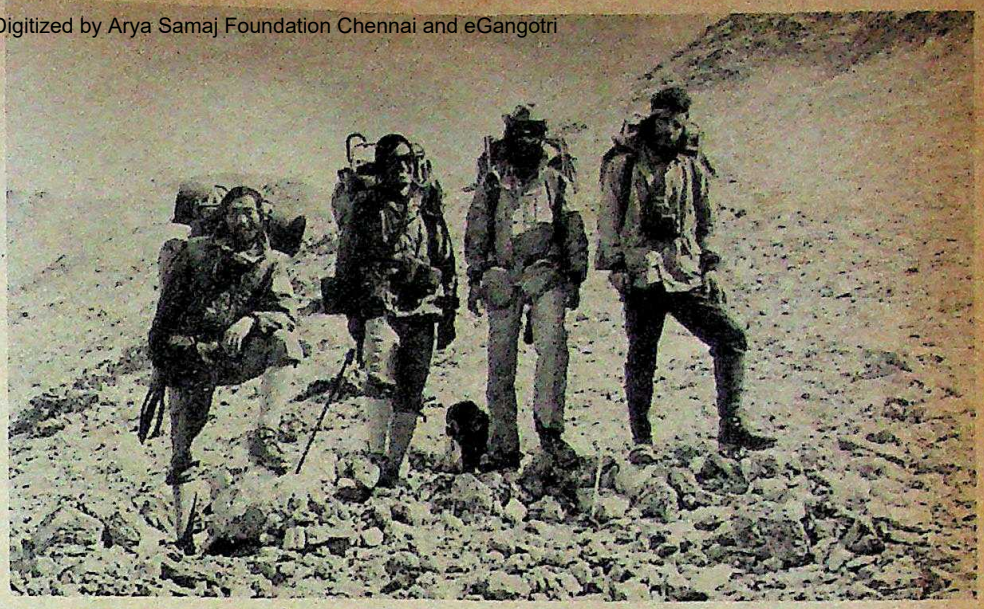
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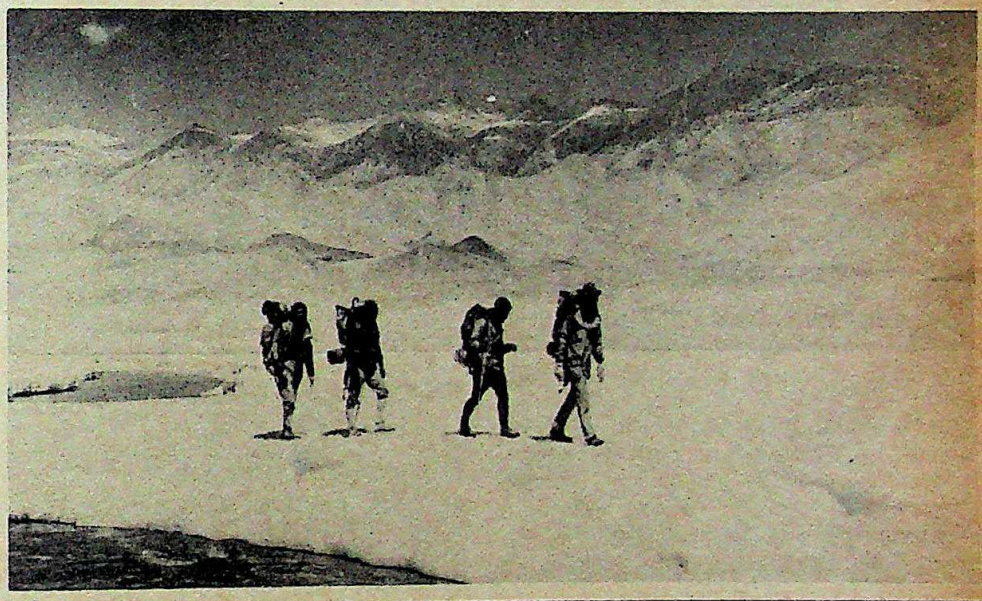
they faced in the steamy, inhospitable
les of Arunachal Pradesh on the first leg
he expedition were miniscule, slimy wo-
better known as leeches. "Considering
needed every ounce of energy and
ishment, the damn things really got us
n." says Chauhan, "every evening when
topped for rest we would have to strip
each of us would have at least 30 or 40 of
reatures clinging to us. God knows how
pints of blood we lost on that part of
rip." The jungles were also swarming
adly cobras but fortunately left the
xes alone. Even with load down to the
minimum, each member was carrying
een 25 and 30 kg, including a four-man
and a wireless set with which they could
municate by relays with the expedition
tor in New Delhi, in case of emergen-
The expedition organisers had also set
arious contact points along the route
re they could send a man in by helicopter
eet the team with a hot meal and a
dshake (In that sub-zero weather, the
opter could only land for a few
utes).

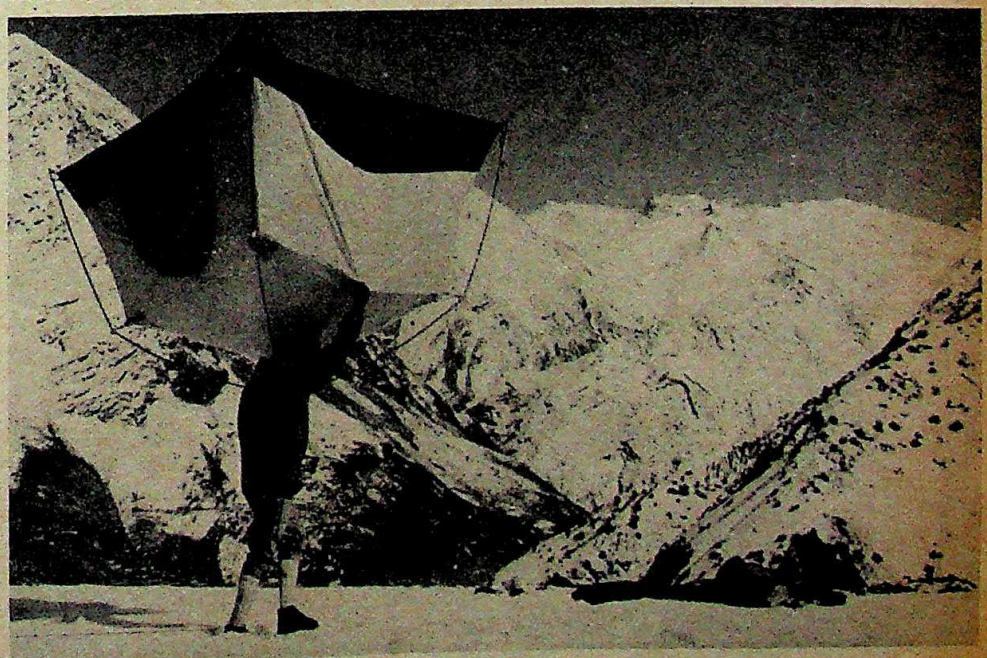
The first climb was the Chetak Pass at
00 ft which they crossed in late March to
r Bhutan. It was also their first major
fall which reduced visibility to a few
At places the snow was around eight
ep and they had to crawl on their
and knees to avoid sinking into the
On March 26, they crossed into
an and its lush, green valleys and col-
ul people. In Bhutan they also stumbled
ss the uninvited fifth member of the
dition, Druk, a month-old Bhutanese
py who refused to leave them and even-
y was adopted as the expedition's mas-
In the 33 days it took the team to
erse Bhutan, they covered 1,000 kilo-
es. The first leg, Arunachal, had taken 70
and covered 1,500 kilometres.

From Bhutan, the team crossed into
im and their first major climb from
sam to the base of Kabru-Dome (20,400
here lack of supplies and terrible weather
ed them back to Yoksam. Finally, they
d the Rotangla Pass (18,000 ft) where
k stumbled across a cadaver preserved in
The body was that of an old man who
obviously been dead for months though
ice made him look as if he was
ing. In late July, the team crossed into
al and arrived in Kathmandu, the half-
point, for a much-needed rest and re-
pment and their first meeting with civili-
n in almost nine months.

Arduous: But the worst lay ahead.
dicapped by lack of adequate maps of
area or the benefit of previous expe-
ns, the team, from now on, would be
aging altitudes of 15,000 feet, at times
ng for days at altitudes over 20,000 ft in







(From top) the expedition members in Bhutan with Druk; traversing a frozen lake in Ladakh; and Gurung carrying the communal tent: Himalayan odyssey

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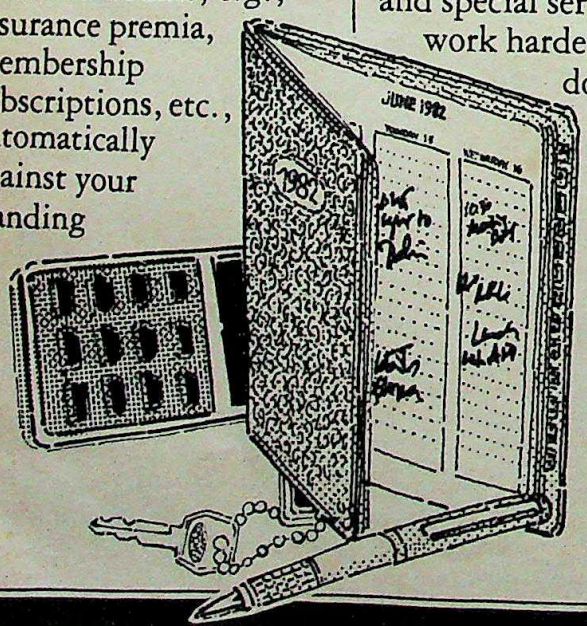
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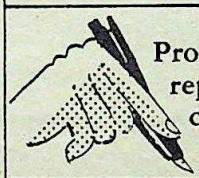
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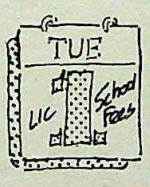
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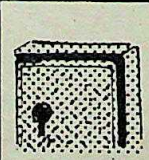
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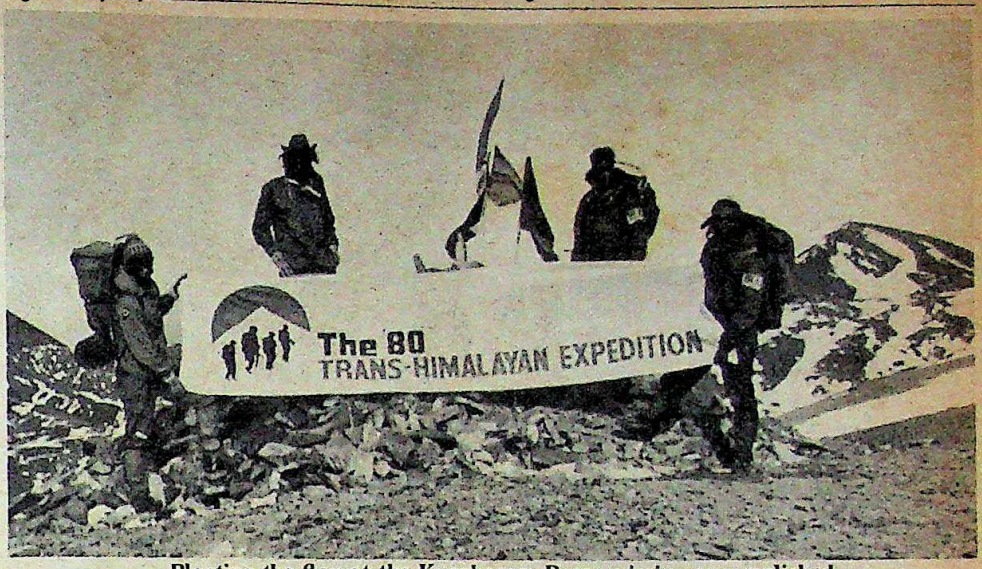
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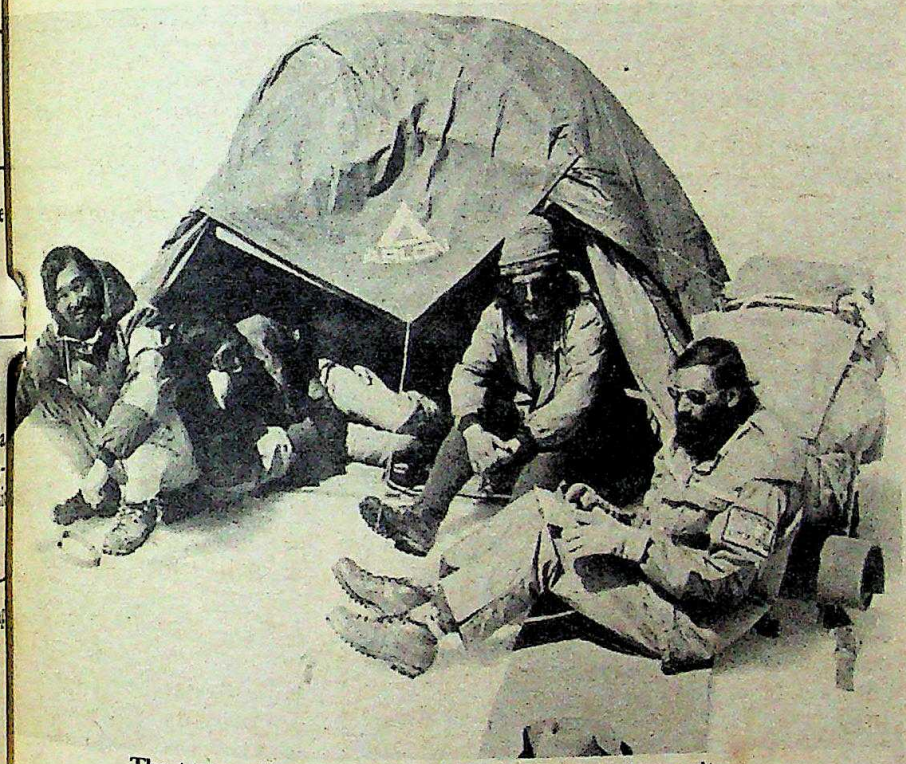
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peratures that reached – 30 degrees. "If of us even touched any metal part, our would peel off like a banana" says rpa. The next few weeks saw the team sing one of the most arduous and dif- parts of the trip. Crossing Amphu se (19,000 ft), they encountered per- ent glaciers and narrow defiles overhung snow. "The slightest noise would have y led to an avalanche," says Kohli. On erous occasions, they found their path ed by snowfalls and were forced to take e routes which entailed climbing revasses with the help of pitons and

Luck played no mean role in their ess. On one occasion, they crawled down er rockface only to find that their rope short by 30 ft. Retracing their route, they



Planting the flag at the Karakoram Pass: mission accomplished


The team takes a well-earned break en route: true grit

d back inch by inch to the top and in ng for an alternate route came across a t rope left behind by a previous expe- n. By October 1981, they were in the purna range shivering under the first fall of their second winter. On mber 20, they were back on Indian soil gling through fresh, waist-deep snow for urs at a stretch. By mid-December, the erature had dropped to-30 degrees and day their tent would be covered under eight inches of snow. "By the end of ay," says Kohli, "our beards would be s of icicles. It would take us at least an to heat ice to get water for tea and by we were too exhausted to lift the mugs to our lips." The dog, Druk, was the worst off. Initially, he refused to touch the dried fruit or dehydrated food that was offered but in the freezing temperature, he was wolfing down anything offered to him.

On January 15, the expedition had completed one year and had covered an incredible 7,000 kilometres. But their elation was short-lived. On January 23, it started snowing heavily, a blinding, chilling snow that continued non-stop for close to two months. Shortly after leaving Kibar, the highest inhabited village in Himachal, the expedition almost came to a tragic end. Skiing down a steep gorge, Chauhan and Kohli suddenly heard a sound like a thunderclap. "I looked up and saw the entire mountain falling on us," recalls Chauhan. Before he could react, he was hit by the avalanche and went tumbling down the slope buried in snow. "It was pitch-black and I was choking to death. I had snow in my eyes, ears and mouth and I thought I was finished," says Chauhan. "Finally, when I stopped moving, I forced my fist through the snow and it broke into the open. I managed to scrape away the snow and get some breathing space and shouted for help. Suddenly, just when I had given up hope, I felt someone grab my hand and pull and I knew that Kohli had survived and we were saved." The rest of the trip was something of an anti-climax after the narrow shave though they couldn't go on without flinching each time they heard a loud sound. Finally, on May 5, 1982, 475 days after they started, they struggled up the incline to the Karakoram Pass and proudly planted the flag as they had promised they would.

It was, however, a promise that has taken over fifteen and a half months to fulfil and brought them closer to the edge of survival then any of them had been before. They had made their pledge to General Malhotra but he was not on hand to share in the success; he had completed his tenure during the long march and had handed over his office to his successor almost a year earlier. Gurung, who celebrated the success by skiing back from Karakoram to their pick-up point, a distance of 24 km, in pitch darkness (even world-class skiers avoid skiing after dark because of the danger) had started the trip as a havildar and had received his promotion along the route. And yet, in typical army fashion, the elation the team experienced on the top of Karakoram pass had been modestly encapsulated into a two-word entry in the expedition diary. It read simply: "Mission accomplished".

—DILIP BOBB

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INDIA TODAY VS CHARANJIT SINGH

The Right To Question

IT WAS a judgement which will have a lasting effect on the rights and duties of the Indian media. Last fortnight, when a senior subordinate judge in the district courts of Delhi vacated an order restraining INDIA TODAY from publishing an article on Charanjit Singh, he voiced opinion in a case which only in narrow terms could be called INDIA TODAY's. In a broader perspective, the issues raised were significant not merely for the Indian press but for the right of the media to publish and take the consequences.

The crucial question, debated at two tiers of the subordinate judiciary during eight hearings spread over as many



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Sorabjee: cause célèbre

weeks—and for the moment resolved in favour of the magazine in the court of first appeal—concerned the right of the press to conduct an investigation into the public affairs of a public person. Specifically, the question was: whether the magazine could be restrained by an anticipatory injunction from publishing an investigative report that was yet to be written where the public person concerned—Charanjit Singh, manufacturer of Campa-Cola and Congress(I) member of the Lok Sabha—had complained that the report was bound to be defamatory of him.

On May 17, after hearing prolonged arguments from both sides, Senior Sub-Judge R.C. Chopra upheld all of the magazine's contentions. In his 36-page judgement allowing the magazine's appeal he set aside the interim injunction that Singh had obtained last February from subordinate Judge Shiv Charan of the same court.

Issues: The case had its beginnings in a questionnaire which Correspondent Chaitanya Kalbag had sent to Singh last January. At the turn of the year, Singh's business dealings had attracted much adverse public notice. Among them the most controversial was the decision by the local authorities to allot to him a prime site in central Delhi for the construction of a five-star hotel in time for this November's Asian Games.

Questions concerning the award of the site had been raised by opposition MP's on several occasions in both houses of Parliament. Newspapers and magazines had run their own stories on the controversies stirred up by it. Some reports had suggested that, because of his political connections with the ruling party, Singh had been shown undue favours.

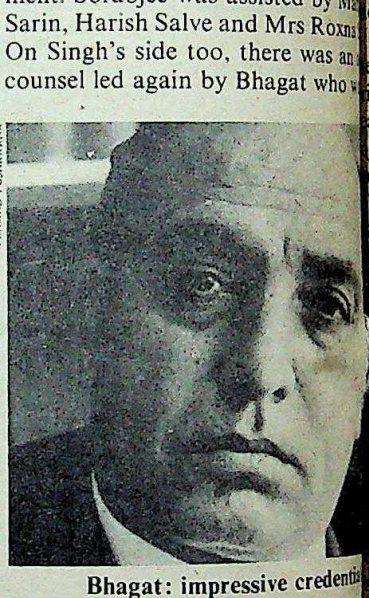
Sensing in this material a good peg for a newsy and investigative feature, Kalbag sought an interview with Singh to see if he could obtain the businessman's side of the facts. But his repeated requests for such a meeting were turned down by Singh's personal secretary, Mrs R. Mohan. Kalbag persisted. Eventually, Mrs Mohan offered to obtain replies to a set of written questions from her boss.

On January 21, Kalbag sent a letter addressed to Mrs Mohan in which he included "the written questionnaire Mr Singh wants". Singh, however, failed to respond. On February 2, the magazine's Senior Editor, S. Venkat Narayan addressed a letter, this time to Singh himself. Narayan requested him to send replies to the questions by February 5—failing which, the magazine would have no choice but to write its story without the benefit of Singh's version.

Court Order: Instead of replying, Singh rushed to the district courts at Tis Hazari in old Delhi. And in *ex parte* proceedings, at which the magazine was necessarily not represented, his counsel was able to satisfy the subordinate Judge Shiv Charan that there existed a prima facie case for an injunction in his favour. On February 5, the first ever court order in what INDIA TODAY's counsel would later describe as "judicial precensorship" in this country came to be issued. And the magazine was prohibited from publishing a story which its journalists were working on, but which had not yet been written.

There followed a number of contested hearings. At these, the magazine's case was presented by its counsel Manmohan Sarin while Singh was represented by Senior Advocate Krishan Gopal Bhagat who had defended Indira Gandhi during the Janata years. On March 11, Judge Shiv delivered his judgement confirming junction and restraining INDIA TO "publishing the threatened article the questionnaire contained in dated 21.1.1982."

To contest the adverse verdict gazine filed an appeal in the senior ordinate judge's court. Here, the magazine's case was argued by Advocate Soli Sorabjee who was solicitor-general under the Janata ment. Sorabjee was assisted by Ma Sarin, Harish Salve and Mrs Roxna On Singh's side too, there was an counsel led again by Bhagat who



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Bhagat: impressive credentia

ted by his three juniors from court—Vijendar Jain, N.K. Handa Gupta.

Judge Chopra accepted the ma appeal and vacated the injunction scribed the lower court's order as "er and arbitrary". His judgement mak cularly encouraging reading for me and women all over the country (se

Important Case: The importan INDIA TODAY case lies in the fact th the first time a 'prior restraint' o been passed against the publicat story that was still to be written. It press freedom and the public's right It was also the first time that a publ was able to prevent the press from p an article whose final shape and con yet to be determined. The revision filed by Charanjit Singh in the high be heard on June 9. Till then the has been ordered to withhold publ the article.

—RASHI

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XTRACTS

he Judgement

the public's right to know

"In the case in hand, a perusal of the estionnaire sent to the respondent on basis of which it is alleged that a famatory article may be printed in the agazine of the appellants shows that it ntains all those questions which were ly a subject matter of debate in the ouse as well as in the Parliament. The uments have been placed on record to ow that various newspapers were al-dy printing about these very matters d a number of questions mentioned d been raised in the Parliament also.

"None of the questions mentioned in e questionnaire related to the personal vate life of the respondent, because his alings with the statutory bodies, in-lvement in foreign exchange transac-ns, and handling of the public limited mpanies were all tters of public in-est in which the blic at large was lly interested. Peo-ad a right to know ut these matters use a Member of Parliament was volved therein.

"I must say here lf that even if the spondent had not en a Member of the rliament these mat-rs would have been great public interest cause public wants to know as to how e statutory bodies are functioning vis-á-s certain persons, what are the advan-ges and disadvantages of a particular al involving foreign exchange and what happening in a public limited mpany."

The court must scrutinise the plea properly with due care and caution so that the right of the general public to know about the public man is not defeated on the basis of a sham and bogus plea.

n the legal position

"From a perusal of the case law erred to above by both the parties, the al position appears to be . . . wherever e plea of justification or fair comment a matter of public interest is raised e court has good grounds for believing at such a plea may be available to the blisher or printer, the court must re-ain from issuing a restraint order."

". . . wherever the publication is in gard to a public man it is sought to be cked on the plea of the matter being ivate, the court must scrutinise the plea operly with due care and caution so that the right of the general public to know about the public man is not defeated on the basis of a sham and bogus plea."

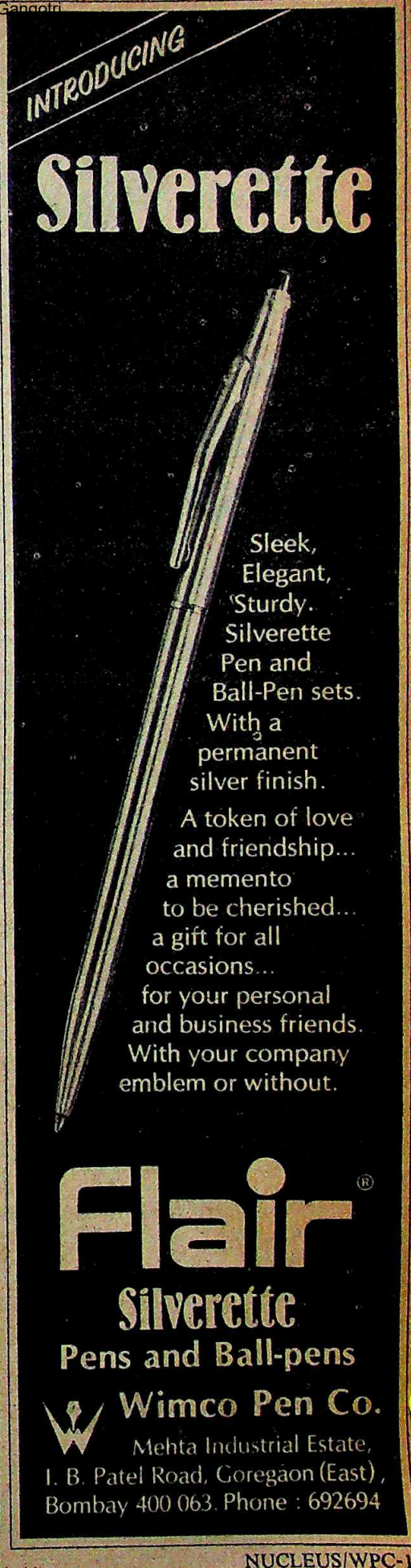
"It is also pertinent to note that the article regarding which the impugned restraint order has been passed has not yet seen the light of the day and nobody knows as to what would be contained therein. It is not necessary that the article will be defamatory of the respondent or will be on the matters which are not of public interest and will be relating to the private personal life of the respondent. The magazine of the appellants which is having wide circulation has not been shown to be even prima facie acting with any malice or motive against the respondent and therefore the respondent appears to be only over apprehensive.

"After considering the case law cited by both the parties, pleadings and the material on record I am of the considered view that the respondent had no prima facie case in his favour to show that out of any ill-will motive or malice or in order to blackmail the appellants had sent the questionnaire to the respondent or that they were going to publish a story about him which was bound to be defamatory and regarding which the defence of fair comment or justification in public interest would not be available to them."

On public person's rights

"The respondent was well within his right to refuse an interview to the appellants and also to refuse to answer the questions contained in the questionnaire. But, it is not understandable as to how the appellants can be restrained from publishing an article in regard to these matters which were in the public interest and regarding which there appears to be a lot of controversy in the press as well as in the Parliament."

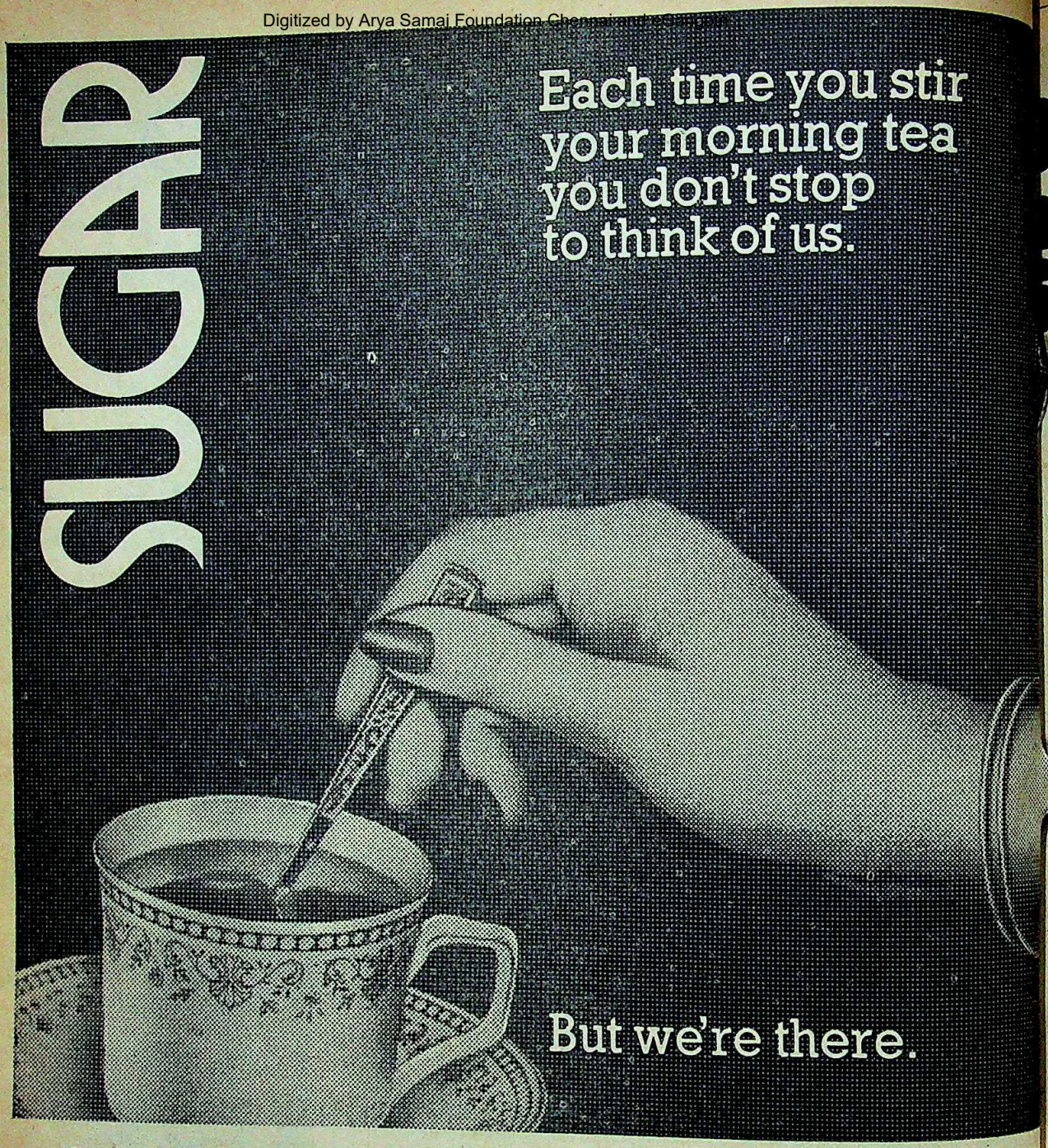
"In case it is ultimately found (after the publicationof the article) that the article published by the appellants was defamatory and was not protected by the plea of fair comment or justification in public interest, the respondent may sue the appellants for damages and he may also prosecute them under the Indian Penal Code. This appears to be adequate compensation and vindication of the loss of reputation, if any."



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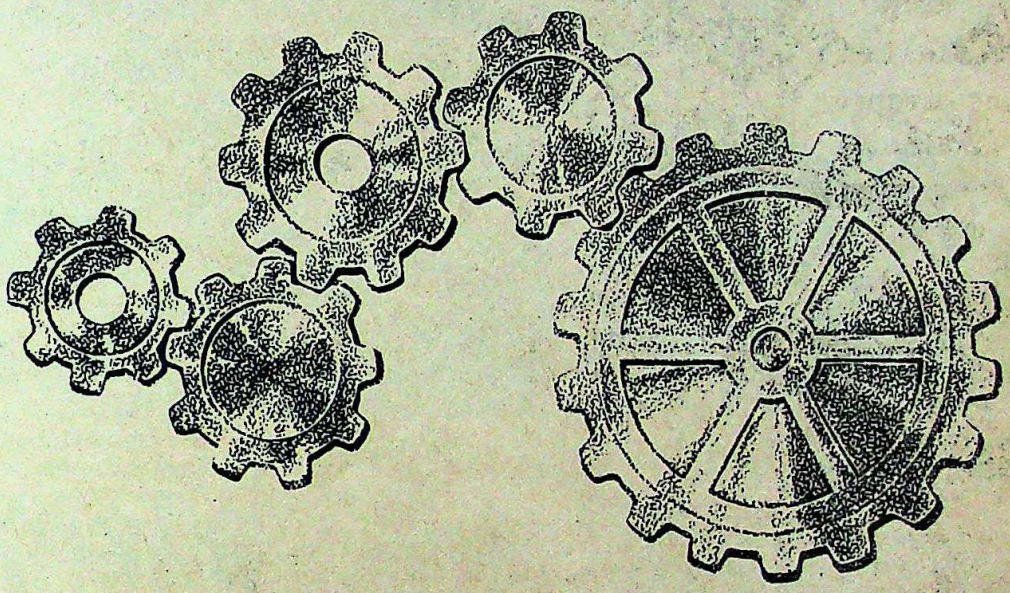
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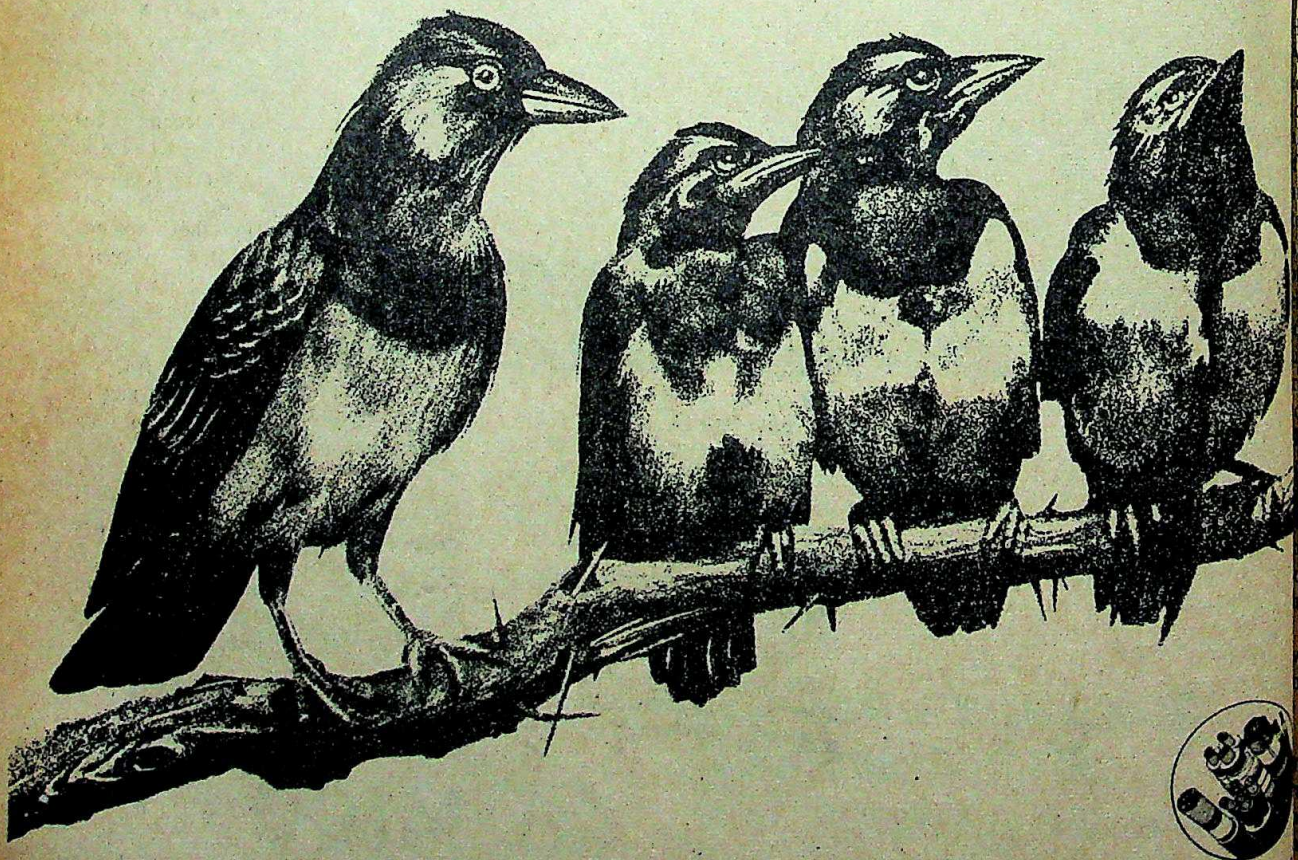
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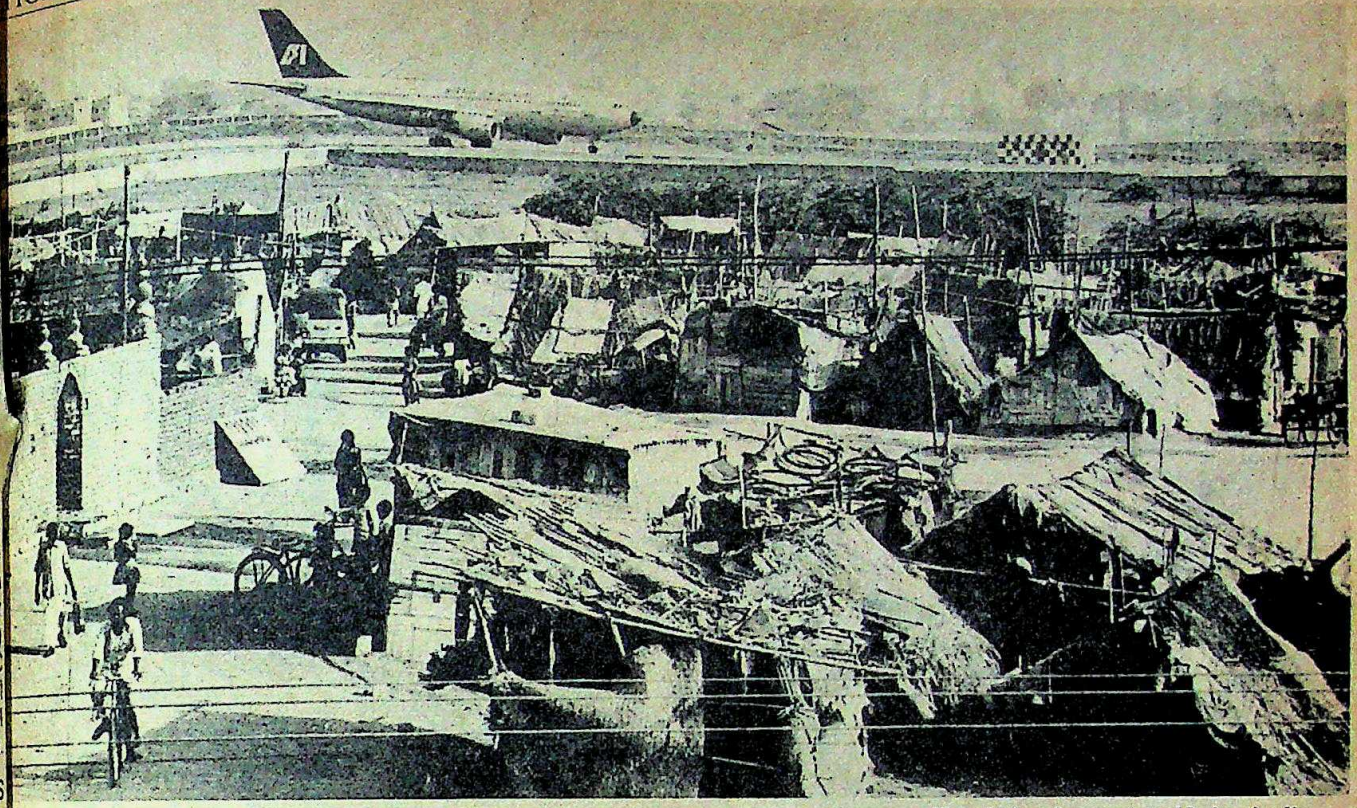
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Illegal shanties next to Hyderabad's Begumpet Airport: fabulous profits

PRADESH

For Grabs

HE RULING authorities of Andhra Pradesh may be having second thoughts about their decision to prosecute 48-year-old Mohamhim Khan, now better known as the land grabbers". Khan's daring ts about his 'famous' connections erally shaken up the fledgling m Venkataram Cabinet and sent fear down the Congress(I) ranks. ng harassed because I refuse to pay us amounts as repeatedly demanded sters, ruling party leaders and ats," thundered Khan at his May conference, adding: "If given pro- am willing to name them all." pite the sweeping charges he made ess conference, a resentful Khan ver, tight-lipped e role and com- f the rich and shady land deals. chief minister T. as among the first d a thorough pro- incumbent chief has called for se- eports from the nd police depart- n the extent of ments and the persons involved. Officials in the districts have also been asked to send in reports from their respective areas. Says Venkataram: "We will deal with a firm hand and none will be spared whatever be his position."



Khan (above) and (below) Anjiah, Venkataswamy and Hashim: flouting rules







Connections: Khan has named Anjiah as one of his business partners and dropped a hint that the Civil Supplies Minister, G. Venkataswamy and former home minister, M. M. Hashim are members of a so-called 'orient gang'—which takes its name from a cafe that used to be their meeting place in the '50s and '60s. Additionally, Khan is known to have a number of politicians, officials and journalists on his payroll. Interestingly, during the 1980 elections the campaign headquarters of Petroleum Minister P. Shivshankar and K. S. Narayana, an MP from Hyderabad, were located in Khan's office.

Investigations by INDIA TODAY reveal that several high-echelon partymen are involved in land deals. A sampling of some of the cases:

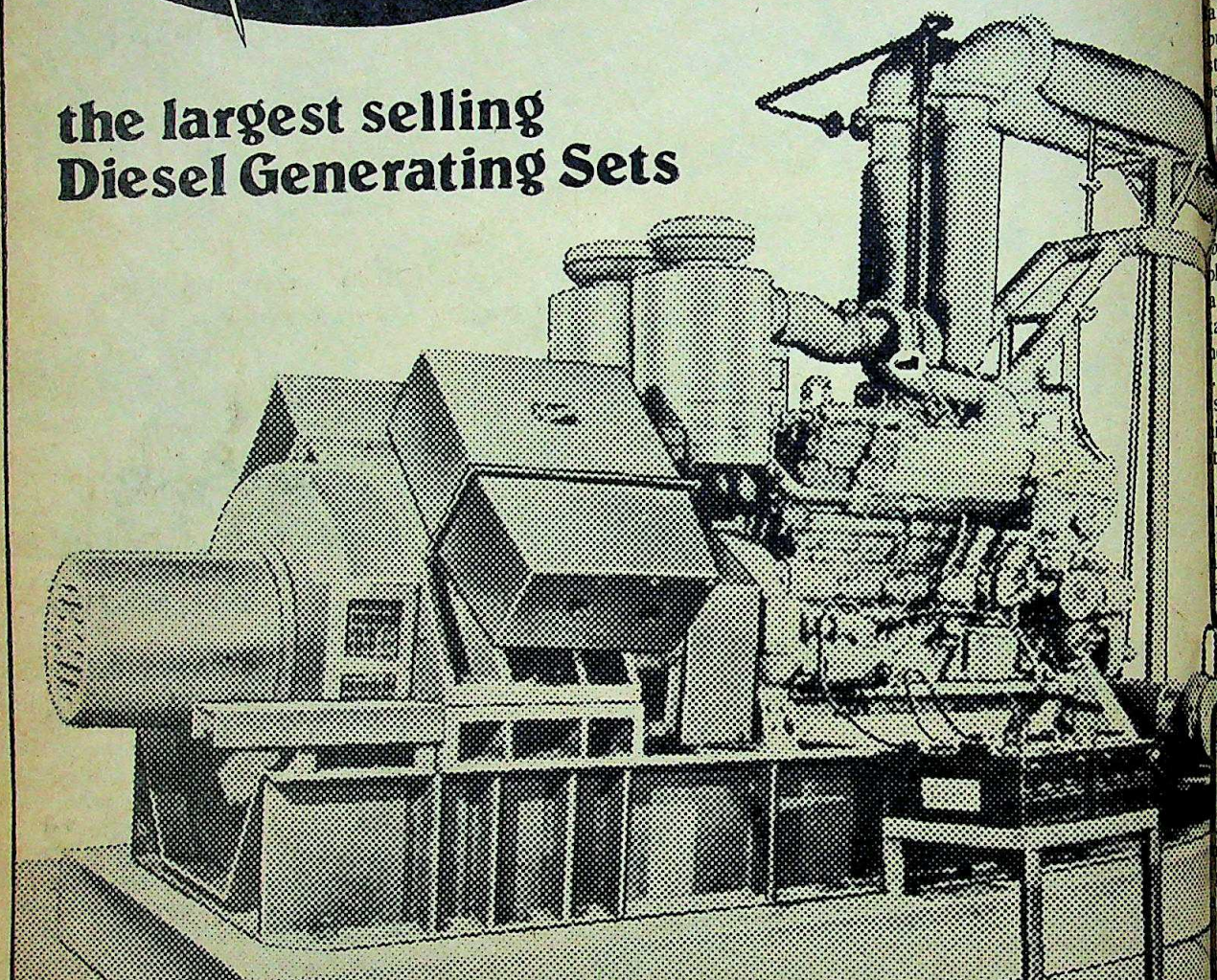
► Revenue officials discovered in May this year that the 109 acre appurtenance to the Asmangadh (Fernhill) Palace in the state capital is in fact government land with a distinct survey number suppressed all these years by lower level revenue staff. This land is already encroached upon and has been sold by officials of the Nizam's Trust presumably on the plea that the palace is listed in the Blue Book of the Nizam's

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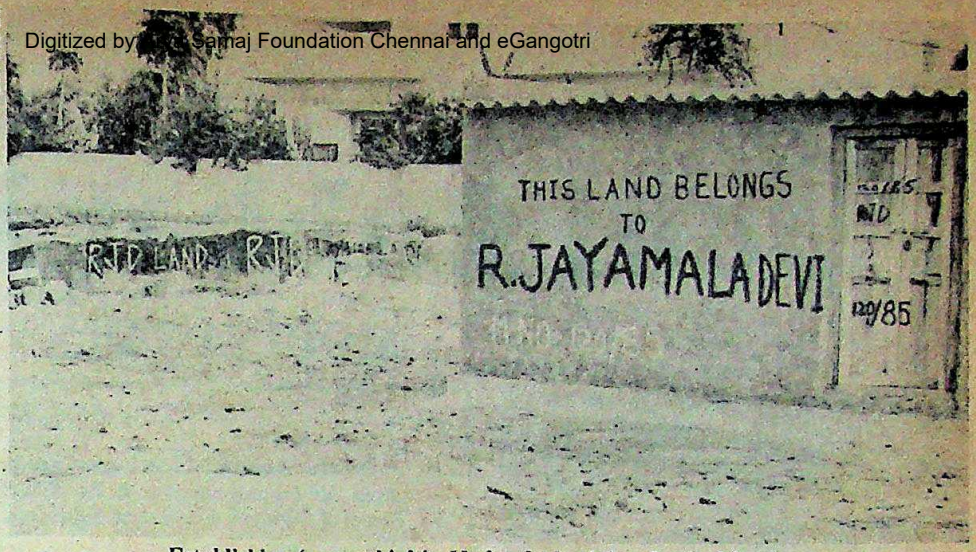
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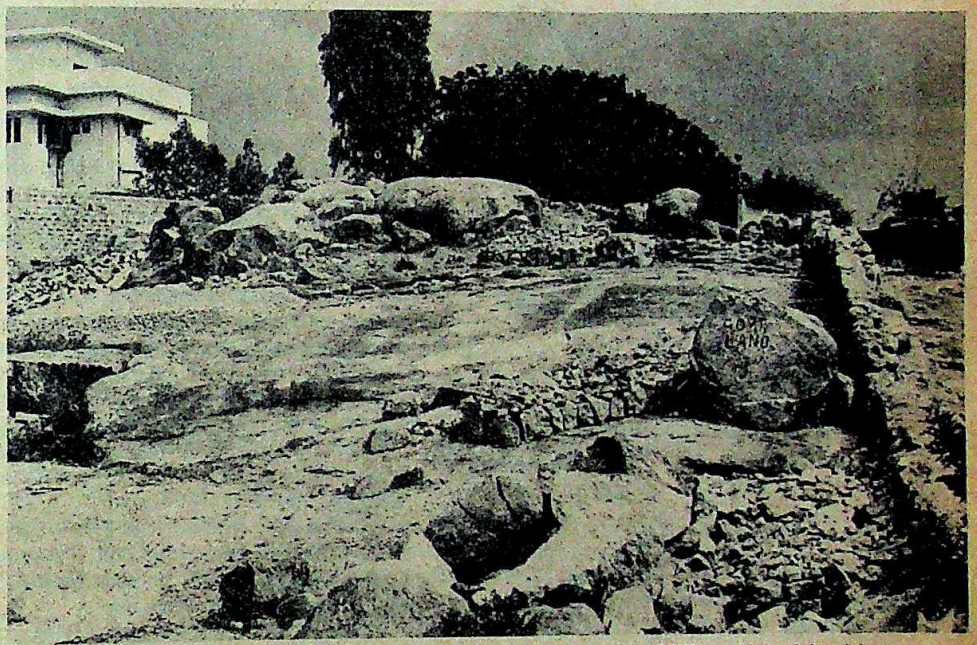
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ties. Other encroachers selling land in
ea include Hussain Ali and Mohan
who are allegedly agents of former
inister, K. Prabhakar Reddy.
early May this year, a single room, on
oachment of three acres on Road No.
anjara Hills, which was demolished
built overnight with two platoons of
tanding by. This was allegedly done
ehest of claimant R. Jayamala Devi,
R. Surender Reddy, MLA and chair-
the Andhra Pradesh State Financial
ion.
pril this year, Shamshunnissa Aziz,
M. A. Aziz, minister for forests,
uilding a wall enclosing a 7,700 sq
lot behind former chief minister M.
Reddy's four-storeyed home in
a. Lambada tribals who had been
ere for over 10 years were forcibly
Police force was used in demolishing
s.
irteen acres of land on Banjara Hills
ted with rocks painted with the
GNS. The land is claimed by G.
naswamy—brother of Civil Supplies
r G. Venkataswamy. A watchman
nds guard in a hut among the rocks
t he has been instructed to contact
the aforementioned by telephone if
makes enquiries or takes pho-
s.
0-house and hutment colony spread
acres on Banjara Hills is an en-
ment on land belonging to the Anand
Housing Society headed by P. V.
an, vice-chairman of the State
g Board and former Hyderabad po-
mmissioner. Pavithran has not been
get the occupants evicted because the
der of the colony is reported to be a
lieutenant of Minister Janardhan

e 15-acre Rasoolpura colony of 2,000
ose to the runway of Hyderabad
is another case of encroachment
y sponsored by lawyer-politician, G.
iah. Says Anjiah: "I have encouraged
several places in the Secunderabad
ment. We Lohiaites believe it is the
the state to provide all shelter. As we
hope of coming to power, we urge
r to directly march onto public land
ch homes."
abbing land in cases where slums
p is most often through a show of
power but, quite often, unscrupulous
rs involved in illegal sales accomplish
flaunting sale deeds acquired through
shing fake document racket. Besides
credibility, the sale deeds are useful
seller and buyer for they can plead
ce and try and win sympathy for
regularisation of their illegal
ion.



Establishing 'ownership' in Hyderabad: claims backed by force



Signs crudely painted on rocks in Hyderabad's Banjara Hill: political backing

Fake Documents: The police are not usually able to lay their hands on those preparing the fake documents though in some stray cases duplicate stamps of *tehsildars* and other revenue officials have been seized from a few racketeers. Some fake sale deeds claim that the land has been bought from a person who migrated to Pakistan while in other cases the name of the seller is totally fictitious. Eventually, political clout and other pressures enable these people to get title rights for the land via alterations in the land registers.

Decisions of past chief ministers in whittling down the existing laws are also working to the advantage of the unscrupulous elements. In 1980, M. Channa Reddy ordered all encroachment on government land for house sites by the poor, as of June 23 that year, be regularised by conferring title rights. In January 1981, T. Anjiah allowed transfer of land in excess of urban ceiling laws to registered cooperative housing societies. Admits a source in the cooperative housing registry: "The effect of this decision is that 636 societies have been registered giving them an additional rank of credibility to encroach and sell land. There is no way we can detect this." In stark contrast, Chief Minister Venkataram is determined to face the problem squarely considering the manner in which the Khan affair is being dealt with by his government.

Perhaps, Khan's greatest blunder is in not turning into an active politician. Says a senior civil servant: "As a shrewd operator Khan does not leave any personal tracks behind. He is the best example I have known of the dictum: literacy has little to do with intelligence." Whether Khan will eventually speak out or not is a subject of intense speculation among the public in this state. Chief Minister Venkataram's attempts to cleanse his ministry may only lead to washing more dirty linen in public.

—AMARNATH K. MENON

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Company Meeting

Modi Rubber Limited

MODINAGAR



SHRI K.N. MODI

Speech delivered by Mr K.N. Modi, Chairman and Managing Director, at the 11th Annual General Meeting of Modi Rubber Limited held at Modinagar on Friday, April 30, 1982.

Friends,

I am very happy to extend to you all a very warm and hearty welcome to the Eleventh Annual General Meeting of your Company.

WORKING RESULTS

The Annual Report and the Accounts of your Company for the period ended October 31, 1981 have been in your hands for some time now and with your permission I shall take them as read.

Your Company has an excellent growth record. In a short span of seven years, the production has registered an increase from 2.71 lakh tyres in 1975 to 9.21 lakhs in 1981 and sales during the same period have increased from Rs 30.06 crores to over Rs 201.63 crores.

Your Company has been able to continuously achieve better productivity through an increase in number of working days by working round the clock throughout the year and by introducing four shifts in selective areas through technological innovations, higher operational efficiency, improvement in man-power, better preventive maintenance and harmonious labour relations. The increase in sale is a result of consistent emphasis on quality, better product mix, effective salesmanship and increase in the dealer net work.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Production reached 9.21 lakh tyers and sales have increased to over Rs. 201.63 crore profit for the current year is Rs. 579.25 lakhs.**
2. **Board of Directors recommend a dividend of 20 per cent on equity shares as again cent last year.**
3. **New 20-point Programme announced by the Prime Minister lays emphasis on pro 1982 has been declared as the 'productivity year'.**
4. **Full benefits of several changes made in the industrial policy will be felt in the com Licensing policy underwent desirable changes in recent years. Notification of April allows extra 33.3 per cent capacity over the best production during the last five ye and above 25 per cent excess production. The said measures will create condi augmenting production.**
5. **System of allowing depreciation on historical cost basis should be substituted by allow current/replacement costs. Alternatively, higher rates of depreciation may be allow subject is of great importance and it should receive early attention.**
6. **The pragmatic industrial policy should be supplemented by reduction in corpor personal taxes.**
7. **Continuing stringent monetary policy will be harmful and inhibit production of goods. Relaxation is necessary to give some relief to corporate sector.**
8. **Recent announcement increasing interest for non-convertible debentures and redemption at a premium is a step in the right direction.**
9. **Prices of raw materials are increasing year after year and there is a further spurt durin last few weeks. The stability of prices of tyres mainly depends on the prices of raw mate**
10. **Necessary approvals for implementing the radial tyre project should be accorded view of its long term importance. This will help increasing competitiveness in th markets, thus leading to export promotion.**
11. **After obtaining requisite approvals the transfer of management of Bombay Ty effected in December 1981 and Firestone tyre is now a Modi product.**
12. **Modi Group proposes to promote various important industries such as Cement, Xer systems and Caustic Soda etc.**

The profit for the current year is Rs 579.25 lakhs as compared to Rs 506.22 lakhs during 1979–80, in spite of providing Rs 152 lakhs more towards depreciation and investment allowance reserve and Rs 292 lakhs as provision for excise on calender fabric and dip solution over the last year.

The current year's working continues to be satisfactory and in the first four months the turnover was higher by 25 per cent compared to the same period of the last year.

DIVIDEND

The Board of Directors have been pleased to recommend a dividend of 20% on equity shares as against 18% last year even though the capital base of the Company has increased during the year due to conversion of loans into equity. The proposed dividend will absorb Rs 191.07 lakhs. Looking to the future needs of the Company a sum of Rs 375 lakhs was transferred to General Reserve.

PRODUCTIVITY

The new 20-point programme announced by the Prime Minister lays emphasis on productivity throu entire economic spectrum. The has been declared as the product The growth in industrial producti the year 1981–82 is expected to 8% compared to 4% in 1980– negative growth of 1.4% in 197 encouraging performance in 198 large number of important indu gurs well for future developme country.

The country is expected to intensive drive to maximise uti capacities available in all sectio economy. A major task will be t reasonable growth rate in industr ture and infrastructure. Steps taken to increase production by infrastructural facilities. The pro the industry would depend increasing productivity and redu

NEW INDUSTRIAL POLICY

The full benefits of sever made in the industrial policy wi the coming years. Encouraging also been evidenced from the Capital Goods Clearance. Th

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ontrol policy announced recently incentives towards higher produc- n a measure of desirable liberalisa- imports.

licensing policy has also under- sirable changing the recent years. cy announced in July, 1980 recog- ditional capacity achieved by the l units in specific industries. Furth- matic growth of 5 per cent per ver a period of five years achieved or more stages has also been This policy has been further d in the Notification of April 21, eby the Government have de- low extra 33.3 per cent capacity best production during the last rs over and above 25 per cent roduction. Further, the list of core ndustries in Appendix I of the l licensing has been widened by ive more areas.

uant to the policy announced in 80 the installed capacity of your y has been recognised as 7.64 umbers of tyres and tubes per Further, we will be availing the of liberalisation of industrial policy oned above.

lcome the said measures as they te conditions for augmenting pro-

IN PRESENT ATION SYSTEM

ever increasing prices the re- nt cost of plant and machinery will much higher than the cost of earlier o be replaced. The system of depreciation on historical cost uld be substituted by allowing ion on current replacement costs. vely higher rates of depreciation llowed which may exceed the cost and machinery presently in use. tep will enable the industries to sufficient funds for modernising nt thereby increasing their com- ess in the international market. ect is of great importance to the sector and I hope it will receive ention.

O REDUCE CORPORATE RSONAL TAXES

levels of corporate and personal India are comparatively higher e in advanced countries. Hence, eed for reducing the same. Lower taxes will increase the avail- internally generated funds for t and downward revision in per- es will increase the investible productive purposes. I hope the industrial policy will be sup- d by reduction in the corporate onal taxes.

MENT BY NON-NT INDIANS

remittances from non-resident and foreigners of Indian origin have emerged as an important source of foreign exchange in recent years. The remittance could be further increased if net yield from the investment in India is made comparable to that available abroad and foreign exchange regulations are liberalised. It is gratifying to note that a move has been made in the present Budget in this direction.

RATIONALISATION OF CREDIT BY BANKS

Corporate Sector is facing acute shortage of funds by tightness of credit policy. Borrowers are finding it difficult to get the required amount of working capital for their current production programmes. The object of the credit planning is to ensure that the available funds are optimally allocated consistent with the need to contain the inflationary pressures in the economy. A continuing stringent monetary policy for any length of time will be harmful and inhibit production and availability of essential goods in the required quantities. Relaxation of the SLR and CRR requirements, refinance facilities etc. are very necessary to give the industrial sector some relief. If rationalisation is introduced, more funds would be available to the corporate sector.

NEED FOR DEVELOPING SECONDARY MARKET FOR DEBENTURES

Due to the resource constraints experienced by the financial institutions and Banks the need for mobilising public savings in the corporate sector has arisen. It is heartening to note that during the previous year debentures occupied the primary position in the approvals given by the Controller of Capital Issues. The recent announcement increasing interest rate from 13.5 per cent to 15 per cent for non-convertible debentures and allowing redemption at a premium of five per cent is a step in the right direction and will lead to development of an adequate secondary market.

EXCISE DUTY CONCESSION

In my last year's speech I suggested that excise rebate should be production-oriented so that there may be full and better utilisation of machinery and manpower. I am happy to note that the Government of India has announced a scheme of excise duty concession for increased production of goods during a period of 12 months from March 1, 1982 to February 28, 1983. The scheme would cover cases where the production in that period exceeds 110 per cent of the production during the year ended February 28, 1982. In the "year of productivity" this scheme giving an impetus to production is a welcome feature. The duty concession, in our case, would be one-tenth of the excise duty payable. A detailed scheme is yet to be announced and we hope to avail the benefits thereof.

RAW MATERIALS

I have been apprising you during the last three years of the shortage of natural rubber in the country due to demand far exceeding indigenous production. While imports have been arranged by the Government of India from time to time to bridge the gap between demand and supply the delay in imported supplies materialising through the canalising agency has been detrimental to the keeping of the price of locally produced natural rubber at reasonable levels. Direct imports with appropriate duty exemption would remedy the supply and price situation and ensure availability at reasonable prices.

The yield of locally produced natural rubber is low compared to that in the neighbouring countries viz., Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. To increase the yield per hectare your Company has taken up a Rubber Development Project. The Project has made notable progress towards achieving its objective of doubling the yield of rubber in small holdings. The increase in yield of the order of 150 to 200% has been demonstrated to the growers. The additional production of rubber as a result of our activities has been of the order of more than 300 tonnes.

I had earlier stressed the need for new plantations to be established in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Tripura and in the Konkan where the climate is suitable for rubber growing. I am glad that the Rubber Board, Ministry of Commerce has taken steps to augment rubber production in Tripura by launching a massive campaign. This campaign should be intensified in all areas where the potential exists for growing rubber.

The prices of raw materials are increasing year after year and there is a further spurt during the last few weeks. The stability of the prices of tyres and tubes mainly depends on the prices of raw materials.

MARKETING

During the last two years we have established 14 additional depots and today we have 41 depots at various focal points in the country. This policy is in conformity with our motto to serve the consumers better. The Institute of Marketing and Management awarded to your Company the 1981 IMM Escorts Silver Medal for consumer welfare. The Company has also an inhouse training centre for providing requisite training to its sales and after-sales service staff. This was very popular and last year 88 persons were trained and received certificates of participation.

The Company concentrated efforts on the truck tyres segment in the replacement market and as per the latest figures of Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association, your Company is the leader in truck tyres sales in this segment. The Company has been able to make inroads into the

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export markets such as U.S.S.R., Ghana, U.K., U.S.A., Afghanistan, Mauritius and Bangladesh. The Company has also started supplies to our Defence Services.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

As you are aware your Company has a full fledged Research and Development Laboratory recognised by the Government of India, Department of Science and Technology. As a result of sustained activities in our research and development organisation new patterns and sizes of tyres have been developed to suit the Indian roads, climate and load bearing conditions. The facilities are being further strengthened to develop new sizes and patterns of tyres to cater to the increasing demand for new models of vehicles as also different varieties of tyres. Efforts are being made to make it self-sufficient and at par with such departments in advanced countries.

ALL STEEL RADIAL TRUCK TYRES

We have made progress in our project for the development and manufacture of all steel radical truck tyres. We have already completed road tests on three lots of tyres received from our technical collaborators. The Company has applied to the Government of India seeking approval for acquiring the latest and sophisticated technology leading to modernisation. This will help to increase its competitiveness in world market thus leading to export promotion. It is hoped that the necessary approvals for implementing this project will be accorded at an early date in view of its long term importance to the country. It will be particularly helpful in overall economy in fuel consumption.

INVESTMENT IN BOMBAY TYRES INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

Membes will be pleased to note that the Company has acquired 15,75,000 equity shares of Rs. 10/- each from Firestone Tyre & Rubber Company, U.S.A. being 35% of the present paid-up capital of Bombay Tyres International Limited. The Company has a licensed capacity of 11 lakh tyres and tubes. Within the next two or three months the entire share capital of the Company will be held by Indian residents.

After obtaining requisite approvals the transfer of management was effected on December 21, 1981 and Firestone tyre is now a Modi product. Within a short period of four months sales and production have improved considerably. Steps are being taken to modernise the plant expeditiously. An application has been submitted to the Government of India seeking approval to enter into technical collaboration with Messrs Continental Gummi Werke A.G., West Germany.

LETTERS OF INTENT

As reported earlier the Company has received Letters of Intent Government of India for manufacture of the following items:

Item of Manufacture	Annual Capacity for
Tractor and ADV tyres and tubes	
Off-the-road tyres and tubes	
Aircraft tyres and tubes	
Scooter, Motorcycle and Moped tyres and tubes	

For implementation of these Letters of Intent, a financing scheme formulated in consultation with term lending institutions.

DIVERSIFICATION

Consistent with our policy of involvement in the industrial development of the country the Modi Group proposes to promote various important industries such as cement, xerographic systems, caustic soda etc. as detailed below:

Cement

Since the last meeting several basic approvals viz., technical collaboration with Messrs Blue Circle Industries Ltd. of United Kingdom, capital goods clearance, mining lease etc. have been received applications have been submitted to financial institutions (including international Finance Corporation, Washington D.C.) seeking financial assistance for implementation of this project which is in advanced stage of preparation for launching. A separate company in the name of Modi Cement Limited is being incorporated shortly to implement this project expeditiously.

Xerographic Systems

Your Company is also proposing to invest in Indian Xerographic Systems Private Limited for establishing and operating a 100 per cent export oriented unit in Bombay for the manufacture of Xerographic Systems in collaboration with Rank Xerox Limited of U.K. The Company has received requisite Government approvals for implementing this project. It is hoped that this will be one of the prestigious export units in the country. It is expected that the investment will give good return.

Caustic Soda

A new company named Modi Alkalies & Chemicals Limited has been incorporated for undertaking a Caustic Soda project at Alwar in the State of Rajasthan. Necessary approvals have been obtained from the Central Government and the project is in advanced stage of implementation. The Company proposes to invest Rs. 150 lakhs in the equity capital of that company which is expected to yield good results.

Others

The Company is looking for investment in overseas markets.

STAFF WELFARE

Welfare of the employees been a top priority for the Hous The Company is keen to provi tial accommodation to all its workers. Keeping this objectiv residential colony of over 800 been built at Modipuram and th Modinagar consisting of 84 h advanced stage of completion started construction of 384 industrial workers at Modipur propose to construct another shortly. A shopping-cum-recrea plex for the workers has also bee The Company has entered into ment with a Trust to run a Highe dary School at Modipuram.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The results achieved by pany have been made possi harmonious labour-manageme and the strenuous efforts put ers, staff and officers at all l thankful to them for their ded I am also grateful to my colle Board, to the financial insti banks for their valuable g assistance and to our collabora Continental Gummi Werke A. technical assistance.

Thanks are also due to our contomers who are the backb industry. I assure them tha continue to get the best prod best service from your Comp

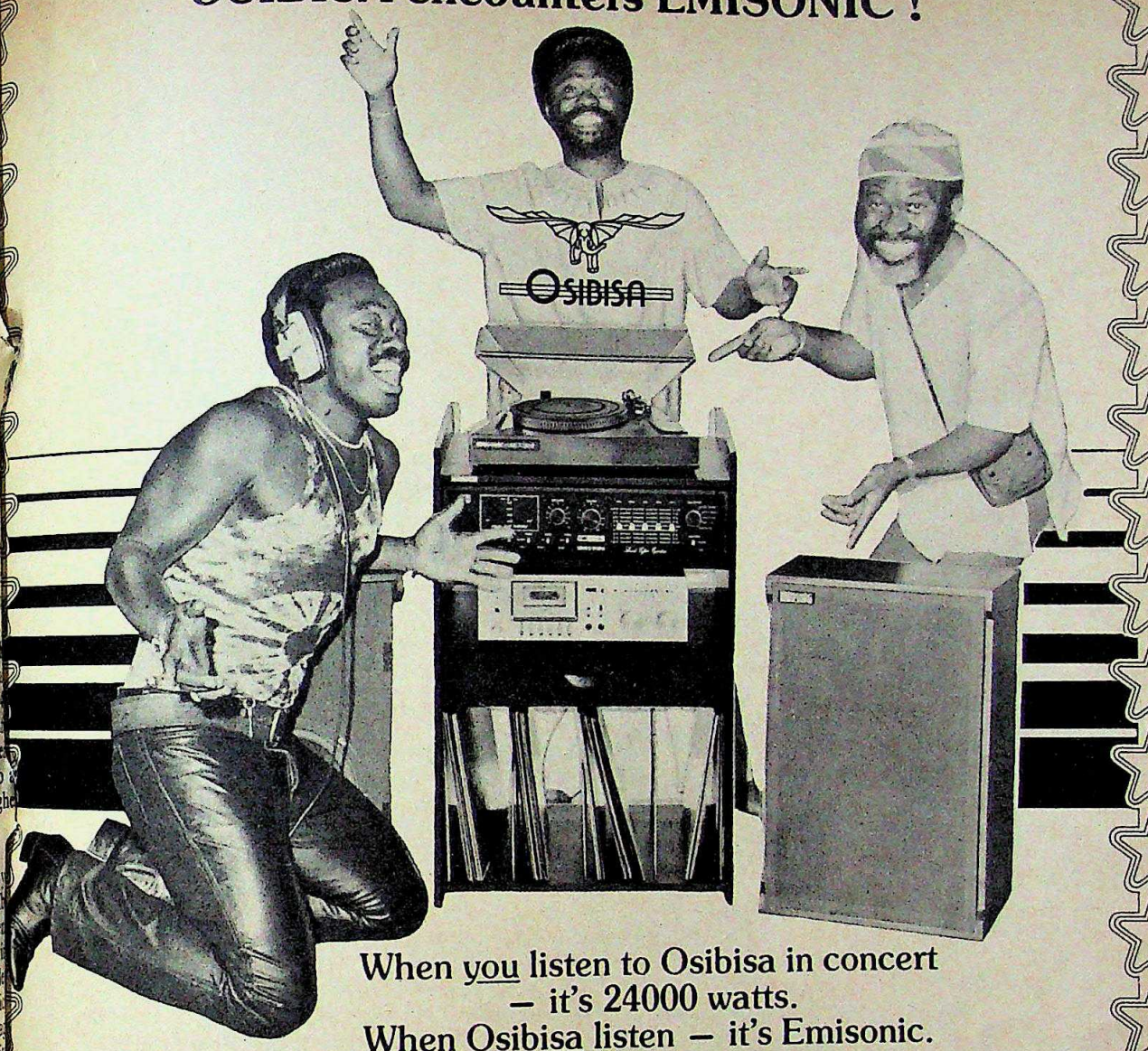
In the end on behalf of t take this opportunity of ex sincere thanks to our esteem ders for the confidence rep management.

Note: This does not purpo record of the proce Annual General Mee

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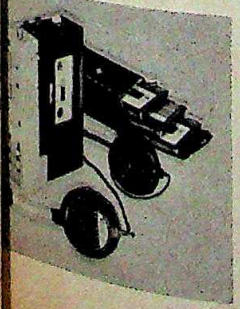
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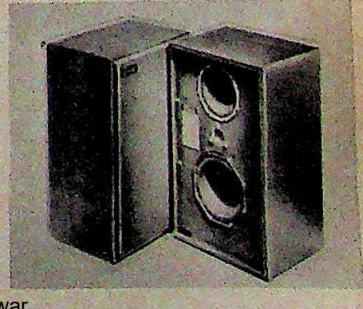
Multiplay Turntable



Belt Drive Turntable



3 Way HiFi Speakers



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ICIM 2904 System: e first major problem it solves for you is paying for itself.

the reasons for the rity of the ICIM 2904 emendous nefit advantage. ed to take on a number of tasks, it ces never-before nies in a larger of areas. the help of ICIM tions software es, a number of nies use the ICIM n evaluating ive management that critically erall profitability. ing concerns have ing it in design to t superior products cceptable price This has been ental in securing rders in highly itive markets.

One customer, using the trim loss software package has actually been saving Rs.20,000 a day on material costs, using this one program alone. ICIM also offers a sophisticated financial package that can be used effectively in taking make-or-buy decisions, in risk analysis, and in evaluating key financial ratios over long-term periods.

Yes, the ICIM 2904, properly used, can pay for itself in record time. Some actual users have had the happy experience of a pay-back period of less than 1 year.

The ICIM 2904 can start small, and grow with a customer's business, to provide greater protection of investment. Additionally, ICIM services cover everything from system selection and site selection, to final commissioning. The large population of similar systems already installed offers extensive back-up. What ICIM offers the cost-conscious buyer (and which buyer is not!) is more than just a system, it's the most cost-efficient system backed by a unique Total Computer Service.

When the ICIM 2904 was introduced in India, it had already proved a success with more than 3000 installed systems the world over. HMT, Kirloskar Electric, Hukamchand Mills, Madras Refineries, Straw Products, are just a few among forty ICIM 2904 customers in India.

A buyer who opts for the ICIM 2904 gets the most powerful Indian computer, backed by ICIM's unique Total Computer Service. This includes consultancy, technical support, training, business and scientific software, system installation, and maintenance.

Equally important, it brings you the benefit of ICIM's specialised applications software support, and the superior technology of International Computers Limited, UK.

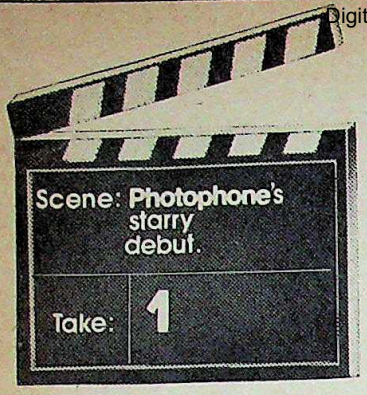
ICIM International Computers Indian Manufacture Limited

extension of your mind. ICIM 2904

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Photophone made its first appearance in the roaring forties.

Those were the days when cinema was getting to be a little daring and technically very innovative.

As children of that wonderful age, we cut our teeth the hard way. Supplying equipment in the shortage-ridden war years to work the way the director, producer, cameraman and lighting man wanted, required plenty of ingenuity and prayers.

We shall never forget our rigorous apprenticeship. And we're still proud of the fact that we're different and innovative. There's sound proof of that at your favourite neighbourhood theatre.

Pioneers for 40 years

Way back, when sound in a cinema house was an off-key piano and the rustle of potato chips, we worked with the stalwarts and technicians in the film industry to bring sound into studios and the theatre.

Today you can see (and hear) for yourself just how far we've succeeded. That was our first 'first'. One of many to follow.

Reaching out . . .

But besides all this, we're known for the excellent quality and reliability of our audio-visual equipment.

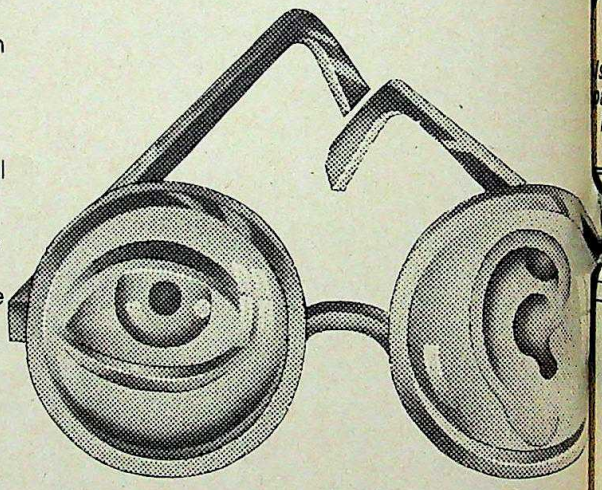
Plus our wide range.

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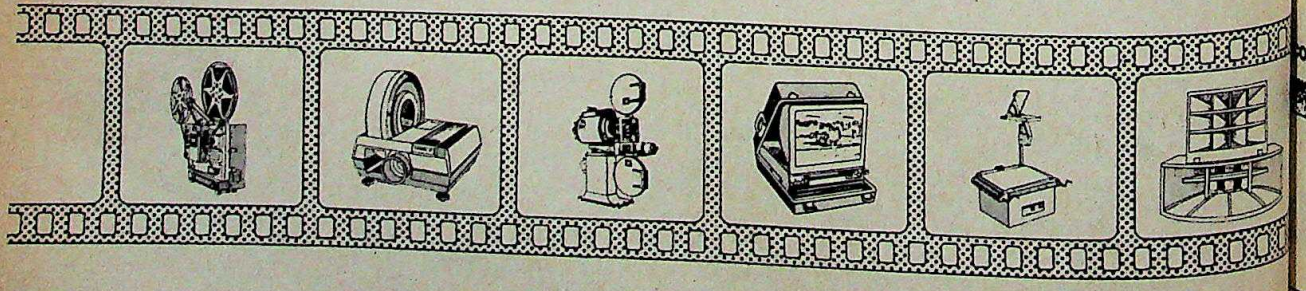
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All our equipment reaches out to the public and private sectors, educational and research institutions, industrial and training establishments and a host of places for varied applications. We even pioneered a special projector to bring to rural India an important and sensitive message: family planning.

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Photophone's grand entry as pioneers of sound and projection equipment in India.



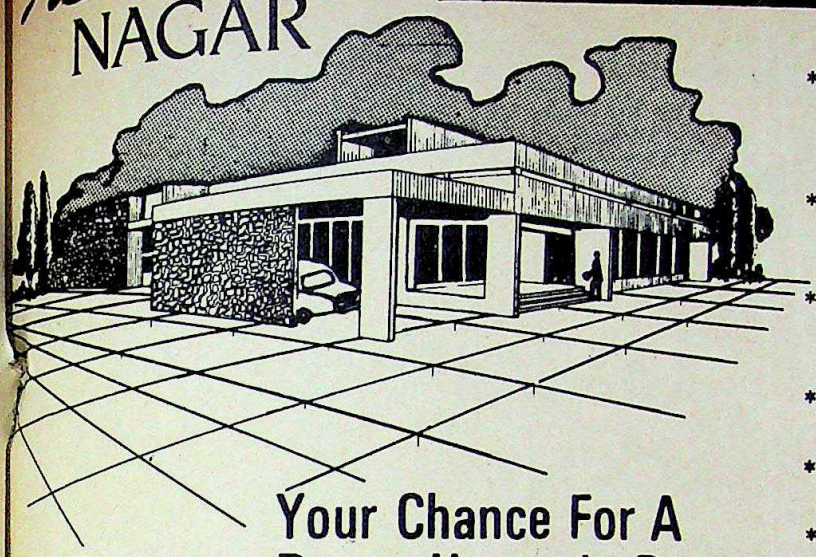
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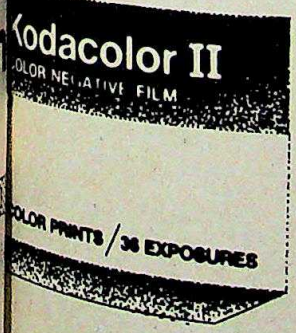
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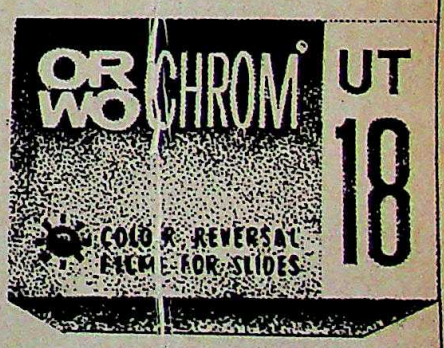
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VISAS

Paradoxical Policy

WITH A flourish of its bureaucratic pen, the Indian Government threatened to place yet another straw on the already bowed back of the tourism industry. The straw: foreign tourists to India would require visas like anyone else before coming—instead of relying on a 30-day tourist permit picked up at the airport on landing.

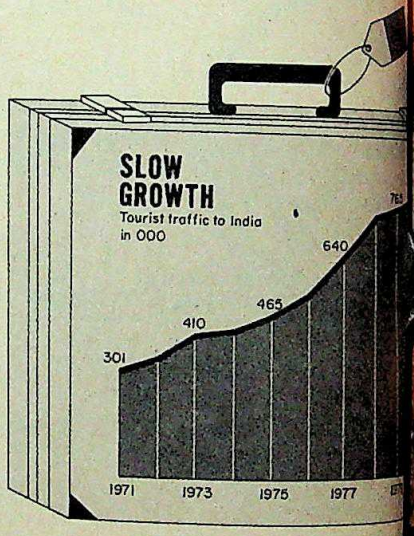
This stipulation could very well be the last straw for an industry which has seen the satisfying tourist flow of last year thin to a trickle: tourist arrivals fell 0.6 per cent in the first quarter of 1982 over the corresponding period last year, when they grew by 7.5 per cent. The visa order will deepen the slump as 62 per cent of all tourist arrivals enter India only after collecting their tourist permits. Travel agents fear that quite a few will give up plans of visiting India, rather than go through the often tiring formalities of obtaining a visa from Indian missions abroad.

Restrictive: The announcement predictably had the travel trade up in arms. Says M.K. Kannan, northern region chairman of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI): "Should this decision be ratified it will send the industry, that has still to take off, into disarray." Adds Inder Sharma, a leading tour operator: "In an era of mass travel, the proposed visa restrictions are not going to help a healthy growth in tourism." Other agents point out it would not be easy for potential tourists to get visas, especially if they live in cities where there is no Indian embassy or consulate.

The big tour operators in Europe and the US will find obtaining visas difficult for their customers as Indian Government regulations already insist on each individual passenger applying personally; many other countries entertain representatives of several customers coming in with stacks of passports. And individuals hate mailing their passports to the missions lest they get lost in transit. The new order cannot but dampen the enthusiasm of tourists.

As it is, India's share of the global tourist trade is just 0.2 per cent, despite a resurgence in the last decade which saw the number of tourists shoot up from 188,820 in 1968 to 853,148 in 1981. The Government is hoping for a growth rate of 12 to 14 per cent at the end of the Sixth Plan period. But tourism experts feel that the actual growth rate this year will be about minus 5 per cent if the visa order is waived and about minus 10 per cent if it isn't.

Lopsided Policy: The visa o... in line with the Government's m... andi of the right hand not knowi... left hand is doing. Only recent... Minister A.P. Sharma proclaim... ministry was aiming to get 3 milli... to visit India. Says an Air-India ... "On one hand the Tourism Min... nounces a clearance to operate ch... bring in hordes of tourists. The... steps to develop Delhi Airport as... cheapest duty-free airports in the w... in the same breath they think of ... visa system that is adverse to bo...



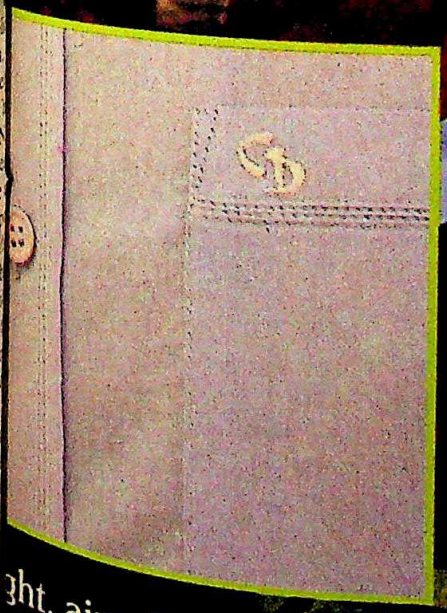
India has already been hit by ... of the land routes across ... Afghanistan. The open skies po... neighbours, notably Sri Lanka, ... courages charters that are relative... than normal and excursion fares, ... quite a bit of the trade. Says Som ... articulate travel expert: "The m... of the travel market can easily be ... to the Government's wavering ... the years. The new visa policy wi... to the delays and uncertainties t...

Home Ministry officials adm... that the new order is an answer to ... other countries: in recent ye... Germany, Denmark, Sweden, N... others have begun insisting on ... Indians. The Government is takin... step possible as a counter. Nob... ever, was willing to comment on ... reciprocal order was really wor... ormous cost, especially with the ... which are expected during the A...

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CATHAY PACIFIC

The Swire Group

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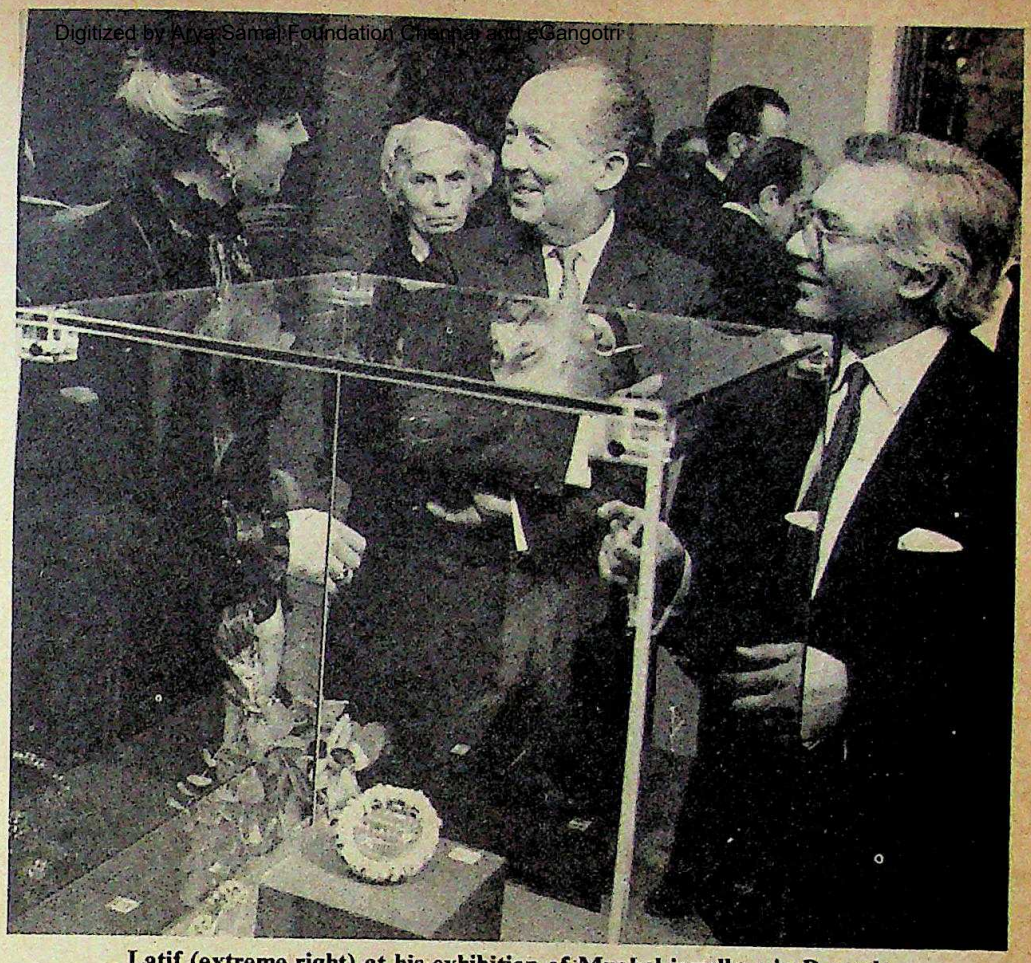
AL JEWELLERY

egaining e Glitter

AS the show that was intended to he core of the Festival of India. But all the Government's resources, y and security could surmount the of putting it together. Instead, a with an avid interest in the subject ged to pull it off in a modest yet ng version. Momin Latif's exhi- on Mughal jewellery—"Bijoux s" as the lavish posters describe it in -ran to wide applause for nearly 10 t the Royal Museum of Art and in Brussels from January to March ; and has now, ironically, come to be ed to the National Museum of Cardiff as an added attraction to ival of India.

exhibition may not be more than a of the extravagant exposition that ayakar had in mind when she spoke wels of India" show as the centre- the Festival, but it revives interest in of India that has never failed to itter. For there are few ancient s in the world like India that their history and tradition through sterpieces of jewellery; and there are ple like Indians who remain as ly attached to their jewels on every their life; economic, social and gical.

ic too, points out the loquacious, rely greying Latif, 42, the rotundity precisely-enunciated vowels match oly shape, that in a country whose shun material attachments, the entatious jewellery was often pro- for its emperors and princes but as votive offering for its deities; and that many of the prized pieces of Indian jewellery today are the property of not descendants of royal houses but temples and religious trusts.

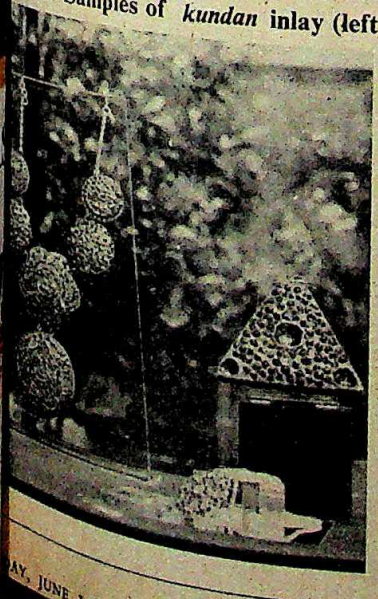


Latif (extreme right) at his exhibition of Mughal jewellery in Brussels

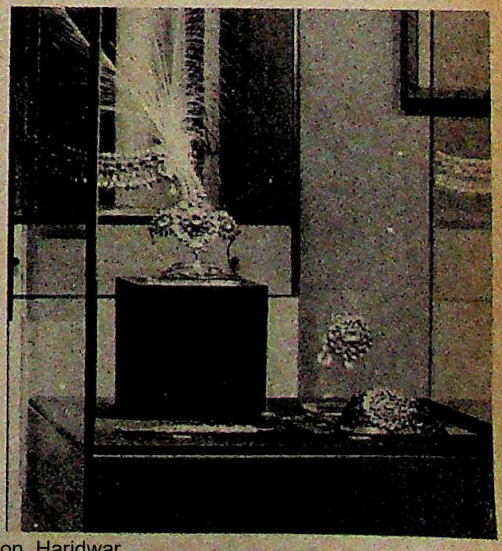
Techniques: The show, however, celebrates not the spiritual or mercantile face of Indian jewellery but its artistic progression; it dwells on the revolutionary skills of the Indian artisan that transfixed the gaze of the world. Specifically, Latif concerns himself with a particular period of Indian jewellery—"one period among many in Indian history that reached magnificent heights"—and within the confines of the Mughal era he sticks to two techniques that reached their full flowering. The over 100 pieces of Indian jewellery that comprise his show, insured for £1 million (Rs 1.8 crore). are classic samples of Indian enamelling technique known as *minakari*, or the highly complex technique of inlay in gold or hard-surfaced stones known as *kundan* work.

The detailed catalogue accompanying the exhibition is perhaps Latif's most laudable achievement: for it considers not just the art through its lavish photographic reproductions, but the history, the functions, and vitally, the craftsman's discovery and

Samples of *kundan* inlay (left), a classic diamond-studded choker (centre) and (right) turban ornaments

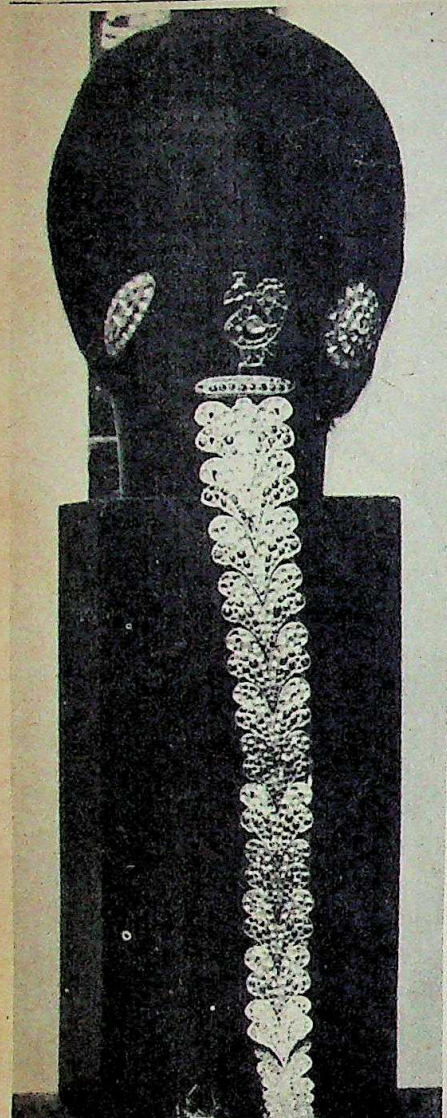






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Gem-encrusted *kundan* work for a plait: specialised craftsmanship

discipline. As carefully documented as the detail of the exhibits are compilations of the jeweller's tools, his raw materials, his preliminary pattern drawings and the slow, painfully exacting and highly specialised processes that produced the finest enamels and inlay work. Latif's achievement in his documentation lies in providing not just a feast for the eyes in the collection he has assembled but equally an extraordinary insight into the effort behind the excellence; so that, looking at the fabulous collection of bangles, bracelets, necklaces, medallions and turban ornaments, one is impelled to become equally fascinated by the lives and times of the craftsmen who produced them.

Latif also admits that his attempt was to set the record straight as far as the actual arts were concerned. Says he: "Because Indians tend to be so cagey about things like jewellery, an awful lot of myths about the craft have gained currency. For instance a recent, ostensibly solid Indian publication on jewellery claims that enamels are created from a mixture of crushed pearls. That's pure rubbish. Enamelling of any kind requires detailed knowledge of metals and chemical reactions of metallic oxides." Though the wealth of detail Latif supplies can get a little esoteric—passages devoted to precise differences between the Jaipur and Benaras schools of enamelling—there are enough discoveries to amaze the lay inquirer. For instance, Latif contends that the fine art of enamelling developed as a strictly functional form: pure gold ornaments wore off quickly with constant use and enamelling one side helped in preventing such damage, the reason why enamelling is found at the back of Indian ornaments, the front generally being gem-encrusted or inlaid. And while Latif believes the art in India travelled from France and Persia, he has discovered that its greatest exponents were Punjabis, in particular Sikh craftsmen of Lahore who later migrated to Jaipur, Lucknow and Benaras to create flourishing traditions there.

Borrowed Pieces: Yet another astonishing, if slightly depressing, revelation of the show is that without exception each piece on display, though Indian in origin, was borrowed from European or American collectors or museums. In fact, with the exception of a couple of pieces—including a particularly fine Mughal box fashioned out of rock crystal and decorated with rubies and emeralds set in gold—all the remaining pieces were borrowed from private western collectors who prefer to remain anonymous.

In fact the exhibition itself was sponsored by a Belgian bank—the Societe Generale de Banque—which devotes a part of its annual public relations budget to organise an exhibition on one field of Oriental art. And Latif, whose interest in the subject began with a dilettante curiosity, is now eager to gain serious credentials. He is planning a major book on Indian jewellery and trying to prepare a larger, more comprehensive exhibition on the subject, probably for an American museum.

Unfortunately, both projects are sponsored with foreign backing and that, Latif is well aware, has its disadvantages. Says he: "It's about time Indians became seriously interested in their tradition of jewellery. Especially as not only some of the greatest examples of it are held privately in the country but because the jewellery-making skills are still alive. All they require is a new interest and a new patronage."

—SUNIL SETHI

PREM NAZIR

Box-offic Baron

FOR CLOSE on 30 years th the face have been s with cinema in Kerala. At any of the day, over 50,000 goggle-ey will be watching his short and a minate figure prancing across cinema screens in the state. A Nazir is a living legend, a man starred in more movies than any history. Last month, the edito *Guinness Book of Records* dropp line informing him that his na henceforth replace that of the lat John Wayne as the man who has lead rôle in the most number of

The recognition was a rath one. Wayne starred in 203 Holly ductions. Nazir's latest film, re month, was his 555th and titled riately enough, *Ivan Oru Simham* lion). Even though he is now a rati 53, Nazir still stalks the Kerala fil like the king of beasts and his roar is as ever. Says Kerala politician A.K. A "When I was in school, Prem Nazi hero; and today he is still arou songs with 16-year-old hero fact, if the *Guinness* people were their research on Nazir, they cou find quite a few more entries to p name.

Evergreen Hero: Sukumari, actress, has starred opposite N sister, lover, mother and grandmo also acted opposite Prema in the then, barely 12 years later, had he Shobha play the heroine opp Another Kerala starlet, Bharati featured as the heroine opposite subsequently played his mother. the Katy Mirza of Malayalam c acted as both his daughter and h To date, Nazir has acted oppo roines and featured in over sequences.

Even so, his prodigious ou no signs of abating. He is at pr up for an incredible 60 movies, are currently being sim filmed—which means he is likel Kerala's number one star for at l three years when his current c run out. In fact, Nazir is the onl Malayalam film industry who own': film distributors snap up moment the ink is dry on the c

What is more, in an ind

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or with leopard cubs: a living legend

out around 120 films a year, Nazir in at least 25, all of them a tribute to edible versatility. His output is a cornucopia of stunt films, pot-ear-jerkers, historic spectaculars y romances. Says S. Kumar, a film producer: "Most of the stuff out by Nazir is mediocre entertain- at draws crowds without overdraw- ducers' bank accounts." An average m takes 20 days to shoot and the cost ut to around Rs 16 lakh per film. onder that Nazir is the darling of the tors.

zir's appearance hardly matches his A short, dark, oily-haired individual encil-line moustache who habitually ell-bottomed trousers, loud half- shirts and sandals, Nazir is anything but the stereotyped macho hero. In the big cities like Trivandrum, Cochin or Calicut, Nazir films have short runs since the city slickers find him boorish and mediocre.

Nazir's greatest strength, and following, lies in the villages. According to George Kutty of Central Pictures, the oldest and biggest distributors in Kerala, more than 900 theatres in the state are located in rural areas while city theatres form only a small percentage of total box-office collections. Says veteran film producer Appachan: "By the time a Nazir film finishes its run in rural areas it will have earned enough money to shoot several more epic sequels."

Naturally, Nazir himself is not complaining about his bank balance. He is reputed to be the richest man in the industry, a millionaire many times over with estimated annual earnings of over Rs 60 lakh at an estimated Rs 2 lakh per film. He currently owns prime real estate in Madras, Bangalore, Cochin and Trivandrum and is promoter-director of the Rs 16 crore joint sector project, Carbons and Chemicals based in Cochin.

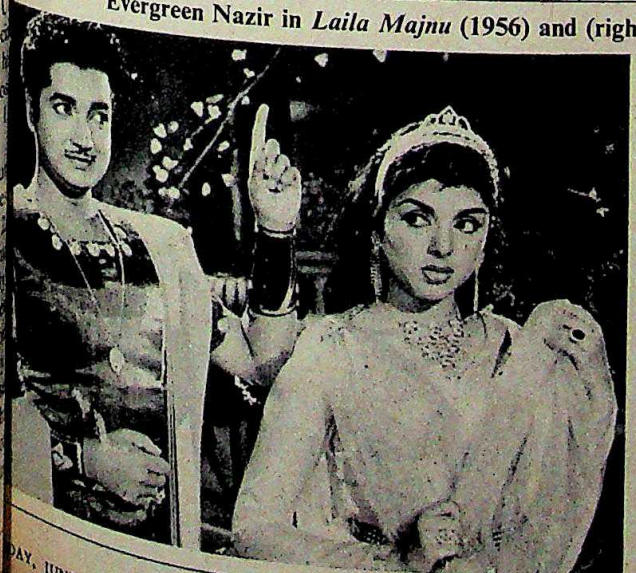
Dedicated Professional: He lives in a posh house in the Mahalingapuram area in Madras and attributes his success to "dedication, hard work and a never-say-die spirit": qualities that have endeared him to almost every producer he has worked under. Nazir is a complete professional in every sense of the word. He is always on time, sober, hard-working and always approachable. Says director Sasikumar who has worked in 76 films with Nazir: "He is a thorough professional and a director's dream."

According to Jayabharati, a Malayalam actress, "Nazir may be the only hero in India who has never made a pass at his heroines." A quiet family man with three married daughters and a son who has followed him into films, Nazir still puts in a 16-hour day at the studios, leaving home at 7 a.m. and returning late at night. six days a week.



Nazir with Jayabharati, his partner in 82 movies: handsome compliments

Evergreen Nazir in *Laila Majnu* (1956) and (right) fighting the forces of evil: prodigious output





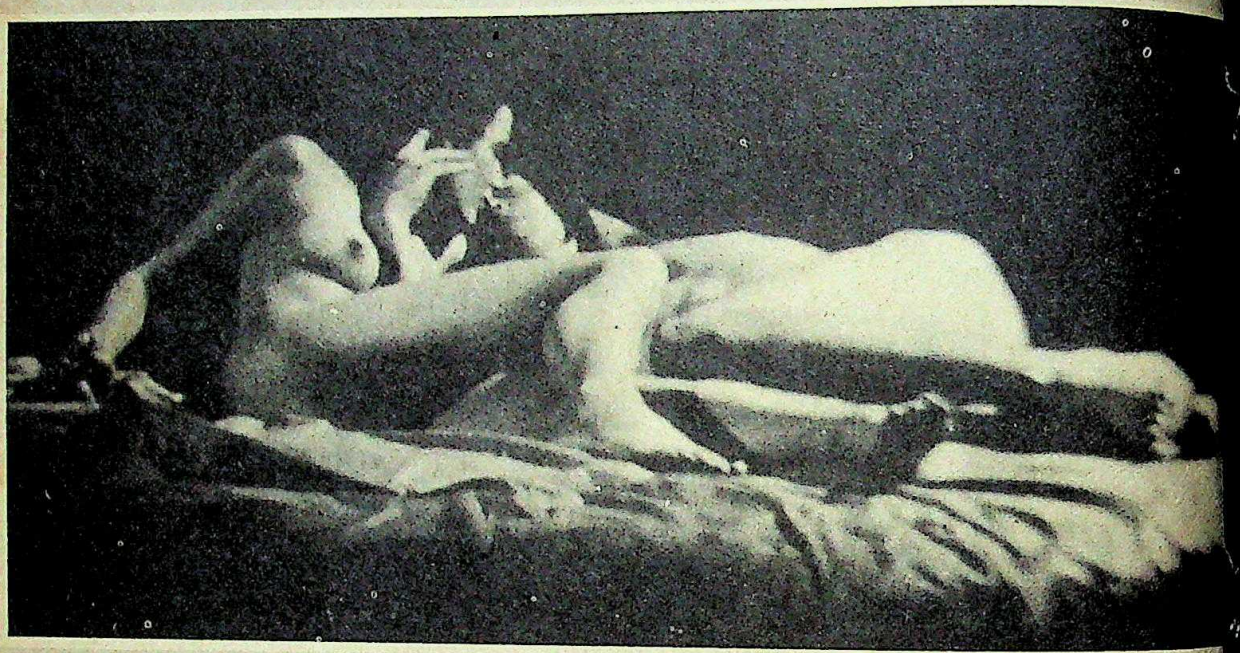
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Complains wife Habeeba: "I have told him repeatedly to stop his stunt films and concentrate on his home and grandchildren—but do you think he will listen?"

Yet, for all that, Nazir has never won a major film award, one of the major disappointments in his life. But at 53, with his enormous success behind him, Nazir is preparing to launch out on yet another career: politics. There are strong rumours that Nazir will be appointed to the Rajya Sabha by Mrs Gandhi some time in 1983, though he refuses to comment on the possibility. All he is prepared to say right now is that, "There is no question of joining a regional party. I will be joining a national party." Though he admits that "an actor's popul... easily be translated into electo... Kerala", with his massive follo... rural areas he is likely to be a m... the state's contentious politics, ... another chapter to the fascinatin... Prem Nazir.

—SREED...



A scene from *The Body*: 'educating' avid audience

KERALA

Sex Education

SEX EDUCATION has come out of the closet in India and has stormed cinema halls all over Kerala. Masquerading as "educational" films they are playing to enthusiastic audiences who have filled the coffers of film distributors and makers.

At the vanguard of this group are two brothers from Kerala: Subramaniam Karthikeyan, a film distributor and Subramaniam Kumar, a film producer. Karthikeyan last year acquired the rights for the film *Pregnancy and Child Birth* and aggressively marketed it with hoardings of a nude woman reaching out for a baby. Released first in Kerala, the film was a great success and all-India distribution rights were sold at a very high price.

Not to be left behind Kumar came up with the "first medical film made in India", *Cancer and Venereal Disease*. According to a top director of the Malayalam screen just one scene of a well-endowed woman examining her breasts for cancerous lumps "ensured a repeat audience for the film". Whether that diagnosis is correct or not, the fact remains that the film made on a budget of Rs 6 lakh became the biggest money-spinner among Malayali films, grossing more than Rs 50 lakh.

Latest Hit: The latest to hit the screen is *The Body* distributed by Karthikeyan, who bought it dirt cheap in London last year. It is an Anglo-EMI movie based on Anthony Smith's best-selling book of the same name and was made in 1968. The synopsis of the film reads: "Many people are becoming more conscious of the way their bodies are being abused by unbalanced diets, pollution and long hours of slavery at factories. By showing the delicate and beautiful mechanism of the body, we hope they might start to think more carefully about the state of their bodies."

According to Karthikeyan this essay in education had a tough time getting past the censors. "Initially the Madras censors refused to clear it. Finally it was referred to the Bombay censors who passed it as an educational film without a cut." Vehemently denying that the hue of *The Body* is 'blue', the distributor said: "All the leading doctors in Kerala who have seen the film have only praise for t... and the Government has exem... from entertainment tax."

But the balmy days for the ... ation" boom in the Malayalam fi... dustry seem to be numbered. Un... import policy of 1981–82 any ind... can import "predominantly educ... films" under an open general ... (OGL) but these cannot be exhib... public theatres. Said a spokesman ... National Film Development ... poration (NFDC): "We have been t... stop this racket of exploiting educ... movies as sex films and thank G... Commerce Ministry has plugged ... phole this year."

Divine intervention will ... sought by all those distributors w... shopped in Japan and Europe f... with which to educate the public. ... that time, the one person who will ... to carry on as before is the ind... maker of "medical films", Kum... has just completed his second ventu... *Birth of a Child*.

—SREEDHAR

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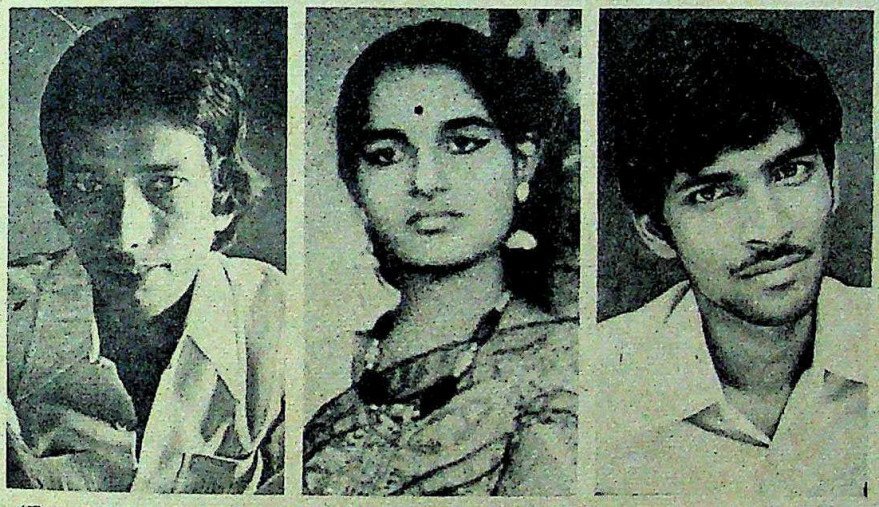
otgun Weddings

N APRIL 26, Jainandan Kumar, a B.Com. student and son of a prosperous farmer of Muksaspur in Monghyr town, went to attend a ceremony in far away Launaparasa blissfully unaware of what the future m, he along with a friend went for Suddenly four armed men surthem and ordered him to follow a house. Terrified, he did so. was ushered into a big house where given princely treatment but was not to speak. At gunpoint he was asked sweets and *sharbat* and change his Come evening and he was told by the armed men that he would be soon and any to resist might his death. Kumar pressed a wish that ld like some of his to attend his wedThey too were bro- gunpoint. The was then solemh a bang amid and a blaring Next morning he nt home with Ane wife forced upon ong with traditional

rried Off: On May n Kumar Singh, 17, State Road Transorporation Depot ntendent Ramjee Singh, was kidat gunpoint from a cinema house in ur, driven in a jeep to village Indrukh s forcibly married to Premlata, 13, er of Puna Singh, a railway employee. given a new set of clothes, a wristnd sent off with a warning: refusal ot the girl would prove disastrous. day earlier Jyoti Ranjan Mishra, a r student of an engineering college as, came to Monghyr town from his lace Surajgarh to meet some relaoon enough, he was 'escorted' by ople and brought to the house of ani Mishra—a local journalist and t of the Bihar State Press Corres- Association—and was tied in holy to Rekha, a beautiful school girl. ese are not the only instances of marriages in the crime-infested disMonghyr and nearby areas, conduce the help of hired musclemen called ge mercenaries'. These three cases, give an idea of the prevailing mood of lawlessness in the area and of the class of people involved. And the epilogue to these shotgun weddings is equally interesting: Jainandan Kumar and his parents who are Koeiri by caste have accepted the bride as they got the dowry and feel that the sentiment behind the *sindoor* should be respected. Bipin Kumar and his parents who are high-caste, egoistic Rajputs have refused to accept the girl, come what may; and Mishra a Maithili Brahmin has settled down with his in-laws and the wife he was destined to make his better half, saying: "I was bound to be married one day. I am happy now and my parents also appear to have agreed to this marriage."

this. There is hardly any resistance and the regard for *sindoor* is so strong in this caste-ridden and tradition-bound society that boys and their parents generally take this as a *fait accompli*."

Prasad agreed that most of the cases go unreported as after marriages were solemnised both sides resigned themselves to the event. Only a few parents have lodged police cases but nothing much could be done as there was no separate law regarding kidnapping for marriages. All agree that such alliances have become costly affairs. Said Umesh Prasad Singh of Mokameh: "Every category of boy—mainly upper caste—had a separate price for himself. If he is a Class IV employee he would demand Rs 25,000 and upward; if a medical or engineering student the demand would be 1 lakh and if Class I or IAS or IPS some in-laws even offered blank cheques!"



K.M. KISHAN

(From left) Jainandan Kumar, Rekha and Bipin Kumar: forced into wedlock

Alarming Situation: Town dwellers say they are faced with a new menace. They recalled that during the current *lagna* (marriage season) scores of such forcible marriages had been reported in the urban areas. The situation has become so alarming that parents try to keep their young sons indoors and discourage them from attending wedding ceremonies of their relatives.

Reports reaching Monghyr town indicated that more than 200 such marriages had taken place with the help of toughs in rural areas. The *modus operandi* remained the same: a gang was hired and paid according to the status of the boy; the gang in turn kidnapped the boy and ensured the marriage took place without any fuss. Sources said that the gangs also charge extra for affording their protection to all concerned after the marriage.

Police Superintendent Ravi Ranjan Prasad tried to explain these bizarre events by saying, "Since marriages are becoming expensive, people appear to be resorting to

High Price: However, the demand for medical and engineering students or employed persons is exceptionally high and everybody is trying to buy them. People found it cheap to kidnap grooms of their choice and force them to marry their daughters. In many cases they paid dowry, too, but only according to their capacity. Basically it's a matter of money. Justifying the forced marriage of his sister Rekha with Jyoti Ranjan Mishra, Amarendra Kumar Mishra told INDIA TODAY: "The boy's parents were demanding 1 lakh as dowry so we decided to get it done our way."

Local people said that the demand for exorbitant dowries was the main reason behind the recent kidnappings of unmarried local employees of the Indian Tobacco Company. The method was so commonplace that even Vijay Narain Prabhat, vice-president of the Bihar state unit of the Democratic Socialist Party living in Parvara village was allegedly not above employing it recently.

A recent police study revealed that this new wave of shotgun weddings was confined to Monghyr, Sadar and Lakhisarai subdivision, dominated by upper caste Bhumihars and intermediary caste Yadavs. In Lakhisarai, Deputy Police Superintendent Grijanandan Sharma said recently three cases had been reported; but they were also common in neighbouring Begusarai and Nalanda districts. The malpractice seems to be spreading.

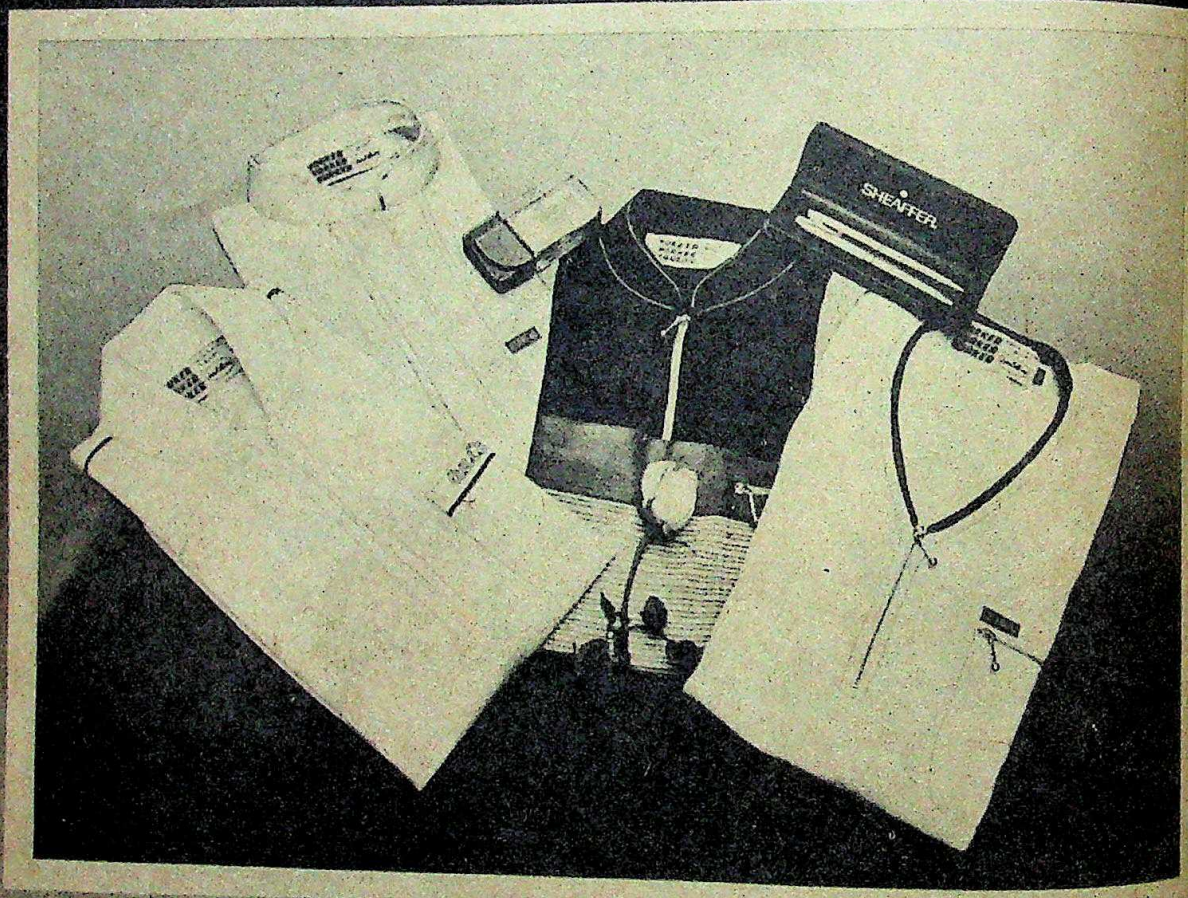
—FARZAND AHMED

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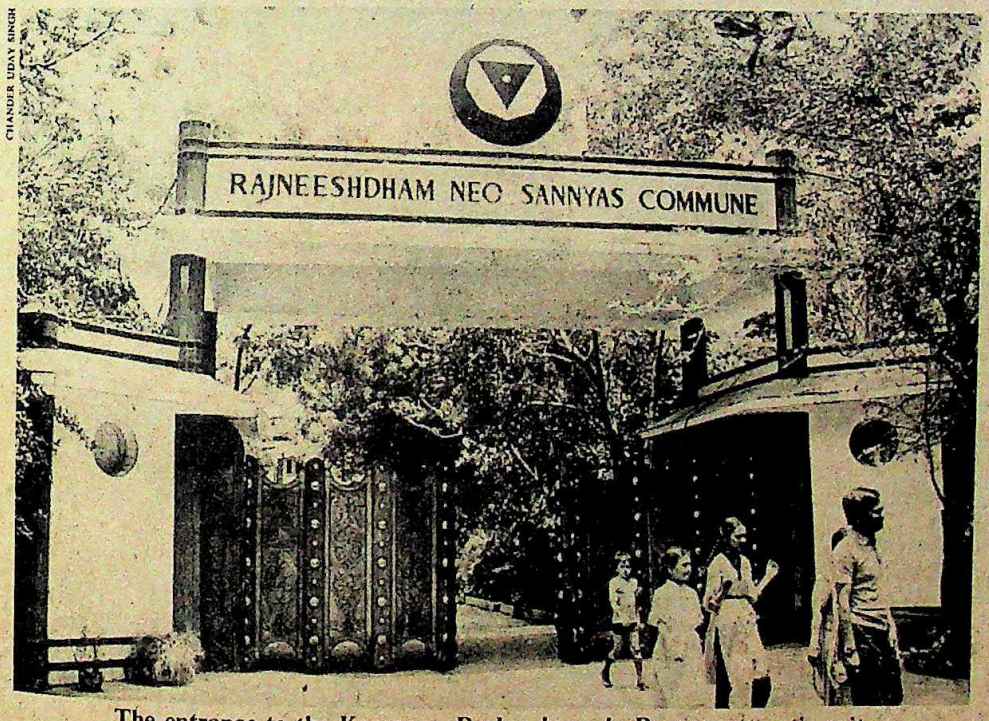
ns Of Bhagwan

NE YEAR after Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh left India, the controversies which have dogged him follow his every move. When they left India, his lieutenants refused to admit that shifting permanently to the United get around complex American on laws, his visa application, ac-ed by reports from Pune doctors, at the godman wanted permission to nly enter the US for medical treat-r his spine. Said John Mallott, de-ncipal officer at the United States e in Bombay: s given a tem-isa on human-grounds. The ry visa was for ths, and later six-month ex-Now he has for permanent in the US, pplication is with our on depart-

immigration y started an ion into Raj-antecedents. : to find out ginal applica-medical gro-merely a ruse d American ion and gain the country. preparations move began onth before it actually came about. number of the 7,000 Rajneesh then in Pune spent May 1981, sorting, packing and crating every that would be of value in America. ds of books published by the Foundation, and the godman's library of over 2 lakh books were sly sealed in polythene and packed n freight crates.

arations: Only two days before une, seven trustees of the Rajneesh on, who were to accompany their resigned. Included in the list were trustee Laxmi T. Hirji, better s Ma Yoga Laxmi, and Sheela n, or Ma Anand Sheela, a radical who took over the ashram admin-in the last few months before leaving. Although no official statements were made, every move was patently towards a permanent shift to the US. Admits Niranjan Pandya, a trusted Rajneesh insider who worked as architect and interior designer to the godman for over a decade: "It was very clear that they were going off forever. They systematically wound up all the work here, demolished and sold off all the extra constructions they had made, and shipped out everything else."

Even while his application for permanent residence hangs in the balance, the



CHANDER UDAY SINGH

The entrance to the Koregaon Park ashram in Pune: systematic exit

opposition to his saffron brigade from native Oregonites has been steadily mounting. Says Mallott: "There's very bad blood between the Rajneesh people and local residents and relations are very strained."

But while Rajneeshpuram is a hive of activity, the scene at 17, Koregaon Park in Pune makes a stark contrast. Barely 25 trusted Rajneeshites man the posh, six-acre residential plot which only a year ago accommodated up to 7,000 sanyasins. The 16,000-square foot Buddha Hall, the twin-storied buildings which housed printing presses and cafeterias, and numerous wooden structures which dotted the plot have been torn down and their materials auctioned. Numerous rented bungalows and lodging houses in the area stand deserted, and it is obvious that the Rajneesh Neo-Sannyas Foundation is merely biding its time till buyers for the property can be found.

Selling Out: In the past year, virtually every saleable property in and around Pune has been sold by the foundation. A huge fort at Saswed, roughly 30 km from Pune, has been returned to its owner even though eight years of the ten-year lease still remained. Trucks and jeeps which were overworked only a year ago have been sold to the highest bidder, and Pandya confirms that at least Rs 40 lakh worth of material from demolished structures have hit the market. Although Ma Yoga Mukta, who heads the ashram in her godman's absence, insists that the Pune centre will not be shut down, this is belied by the deliberate shut-down of facilities at the ashram. Said Pandya: "What is left for them here now? They are trying to sell the Koregaon Park property, but there are some problems with the title to the land. The moment that is cleared they will sell and leave."

Notwithstanding the year-old departure of the Rajneesh brigade from Pune, the sins of the saffron sanyasins have come home to roost. Disclosures in Pune last fortnight revealed that the Rajneesh Foundation was up to its neck in income tax arrears, defalcations with the charities commissioner, a major insurance fraud, and a string of cases for criminal offences which were still being investigated when they left. Income tax arrears till the assessment year 1978–79 alone amount to Rs 1.07 crore, and the three subsequent assessments, still to be completed, will increase the figure by at least 100 per cent. Although foundation bank accounts have been attached by tax authorities, it is unlikely that these accounts will yield even a fraction of this figure.

The foundation also owes Rs 3.22 lakh to the charities commissioner's office for unpaid contributions levied by the state Government. But financial and property affairs in the Rajneesh Foundation are in such a murky state that it is unlikely that the authorities will be able to pin down the offenders. Seven of the 11 trustees, technically liable for mismanagement or defalcations by the trust, have resigned and left the country. The titles to trust-owned pro-

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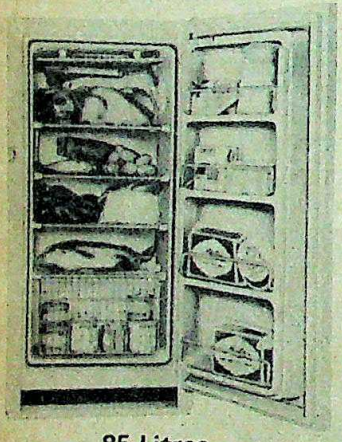
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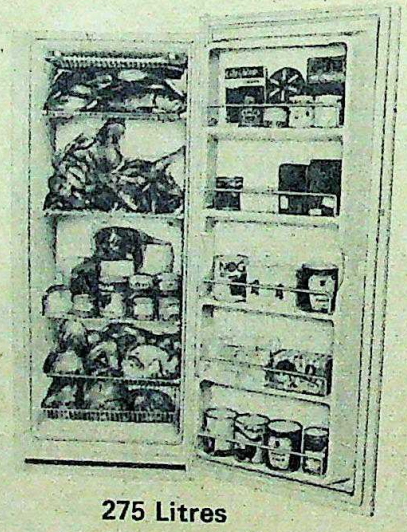
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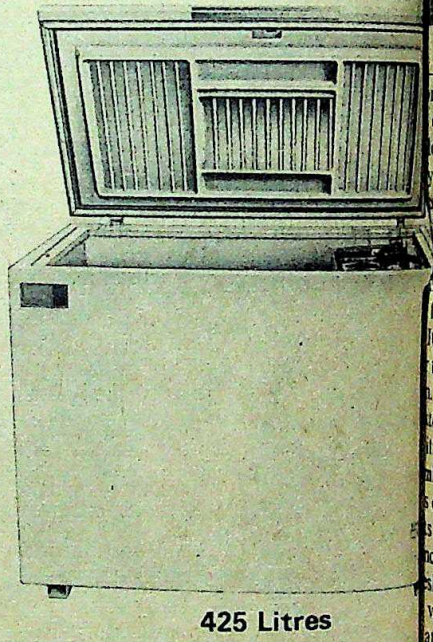
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Rajneesh with one of his four Rolls-Royce Corniches in Rajneeshpuram USA: applied for permanent residence

reover, are in a deliberately mud- confusing state: of the four bu- lots which make up 17, Koregaon two are legally transferred to the ; another piece of real estate, a m in Saswed, is owned on paper rative formed of members of following, technically distinct foundation. Admitted a revenue It will be almost impossible for us the amounts that are outstanding . Everything has been muddled to ent that we'll be lucky to get even t."

nised: Only shortly before disappearance last June, the ash- inhabitants were embroiled in a ncidents which were publicised by sh press office as being proof that victimised by Puneites. A police attached to the foreigners regis- nch was alleged to have raped a yasin, a brother of the assistant mmissioner was accused of molest- ins, the landlord of the Saswed s implicated in a case of attem- and cases of bombing and arson ered against the same landlord mber of home-made bombs went ajneesh book godown and the edical centre. The loss from fire own was declared as over Rs 1.5 e CID was called in, insurance , and the investigation begun. later both police and CID officials e unanimous in their charge that ts were rigged by Rajneesh fol- the godown fire case, ashram vered their declaration of losses .5 crore to Rs 5 lakh as in- vestigations progressed. Furthermore, the foundation had less than two months before the fire taken fresh insurance for Rs 25 lakh on the contents of the godown. Said Additional Inspector General of the CID Ramakant Kulkarni: "The circumstances ruled out the possibility of involvement of outside persons. Considering that no outsiders had any access and that the godown was manned round the clock and that they had their own security guards, the possibility of someone from inside having perpetrated the crime gains importance."

Rajneesh arriving in Oregon last year



The string of rape and molestation cases filed against Pune citizens have also been written off by police as false complaints. "These were simple cases of entrapment," said a senior police official. "Whenever they found anybody stepping out of line in his dealings with them they would set him up and trap him in a molestation case." Unofficially, however, police officials admit that they will be unable to prosecute the foundation or its members for lodging false and malicious complaints. Since the people responsible have already flown the coop, the police will write off the criminal cases "for lack of evidence".

In Pune, meanwhile, the absence of Rajneesh's orange following is sorely missed. Hotels and lodging houses, which had a field day in the seven years of saffron colonisation, have slashed their rates by upto two-thirds, and many in the Koregaon Park area have downed shutters. The open cafes and soft drink stalls around Bund Gardens, many of them coloured saffron or orange to attract the Rajneeshite custom, are virtually empty today. In Centre Street, once cluttered with cloth shops which had switched over completely to the saffron trade, only one remains. Said Lachu Akatrai, its owner, despondently: "Even we're going to go back to normal colours and clothing in a week or two. Last year at this time we sold 50-60 dresses daily, and now if we sell 15 in a whole month we're lucky." The bonanza over, Puneites are gradually slipping back to the pre-Rajneesh days. While the godman takes his custom to Oregon.

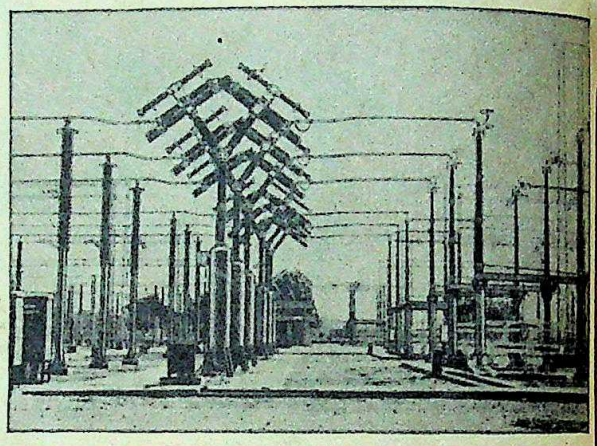
—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

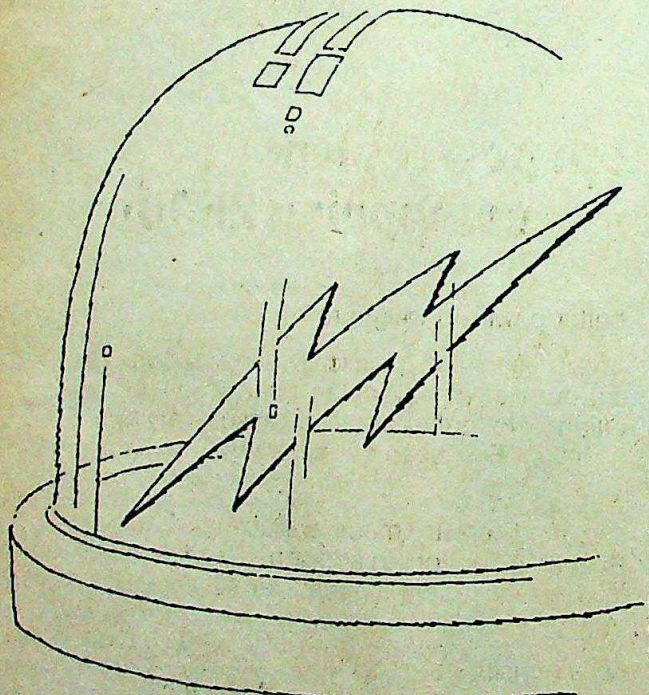
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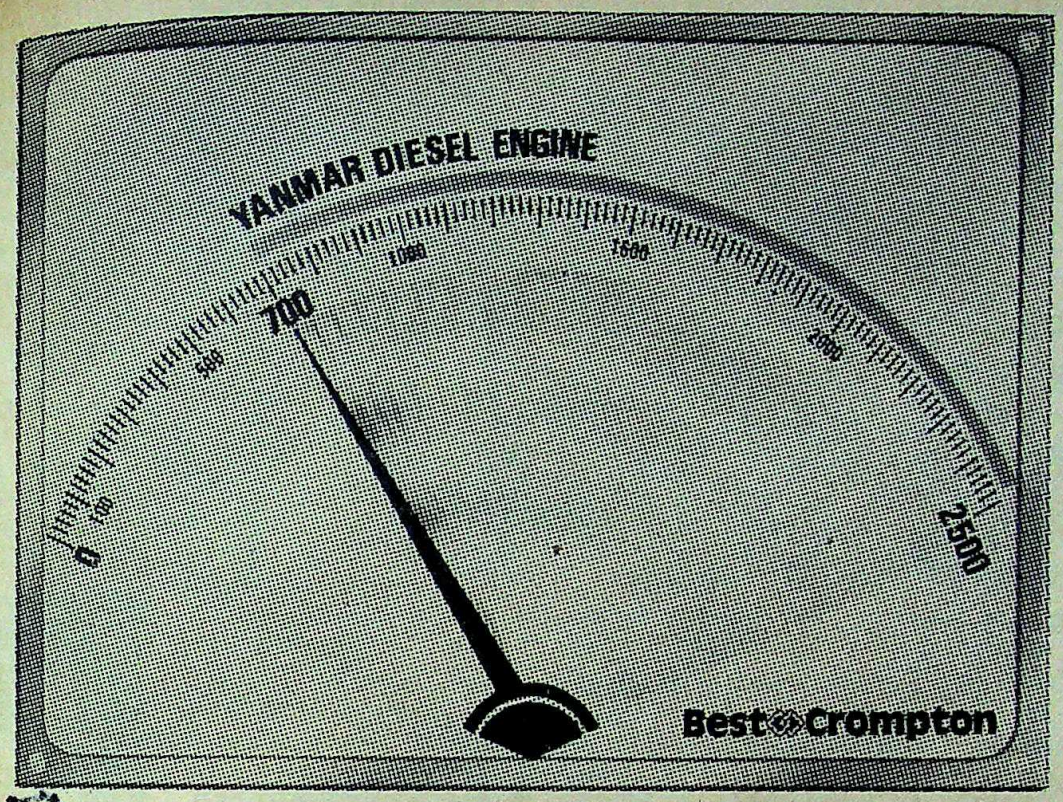
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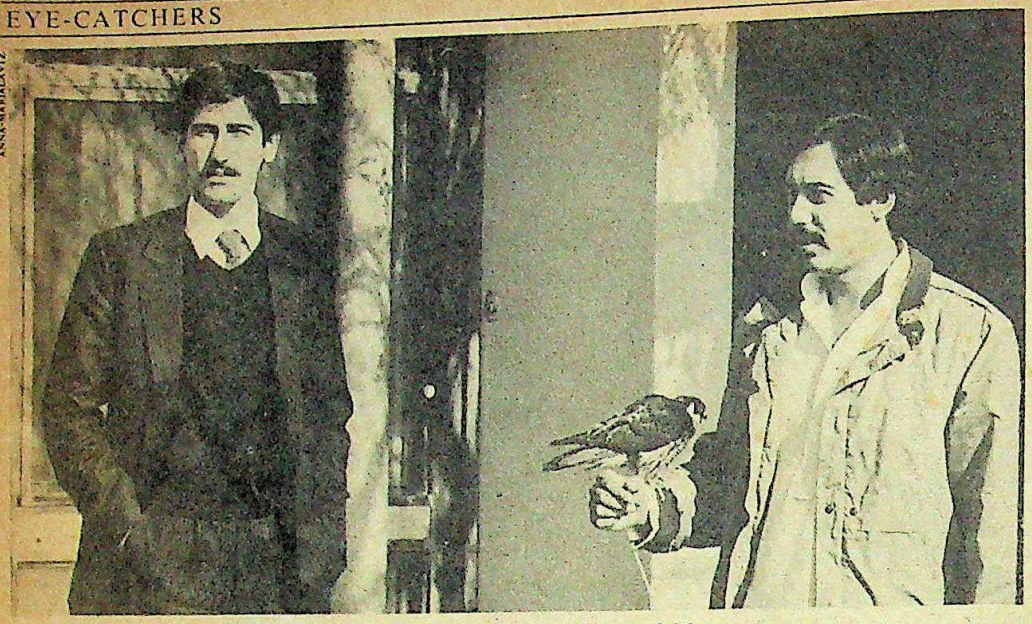
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Shahnawaz (left) and Murtaza: successful hunt

■ As the most famous guerrilla duo this side of the Suez, **Murtaza** and **Shahnawaz Bhutto**, the sons of the former Pakistan president, are accustomed to hunting in pairs. So it comes as no surprise that the brothers have managed to bag a brace of birds, of the two legged variety, that is. Last month, in a secret ceremony in Kabul, where they are living in self-imposed exile, the two brothers married two sisters, daughters of an Afghan diplomat.

Though the nuptials have been kept a close secret, news of the marriage has managed to filter out to India, and presumably, Pakistan, where their mother, **Nusrat** and sister, **Benazir** are currently under arrest. The brides are reported to be very attractive and talented girls who have settled quietly into the rented house in Kabul's embassy row from where the Bhutto brothers have been orchestrating their guerrilla war against the regime of General Zia-ul Haq.

■ It is, quite literally, a gathering of skin specialists. Officially, however, the name of the game is Miss India contest, the annual ritual that supposedly selects the cream of the Indian cheesecake. Last fortnight, by the time the last of the leggy entrants had swivelled off the catwalk in Bombay's Taj Mahal hotel there was no question about who would wear the 1982 crown; **Pamela Singh**, 19, the curvaceous and confident Bombay model. Singh is pretty much a household name, at least for those who use Nescafé, Close-up toothpaste, Tiara Shampoo or Boroline cream, having modelled the aforementioned products at one stage or another of her career. She is, however, an unqueenly beauty queen with a down-to-earth manner and no illusions about life. Frankly admitting that she was "too dumb" to go in for veterinary education, a career she once wanted, Singh now has her sights set on the hairdressing business. Naturally, she would like to start at the top by training with Larry King. the world-famous New York hairdresser. Kings and queens go together after all.

Pamela Singh: Miss India, 1982



■ It was a case of life imitating art. Having failed at doing the macho thing in his screen debut in *Rocky*, **Sunjay Dutt**, 23, son of Bombay Sheriff Sunil Dutt was making up last fortnight with a shooting session all on his own.

But the camera was replaced by a twelve-bore shotgun, and the only shooting being done on the co... the late Nargis Dutt's ... last fortnight was ... junior pulling the tri... unclear whether he ... the influence of liqu... dulging in film-type h... but by 10.30p.m. the ... actor was tearing up ... nds with blasts of his ... One round shot a w... pieces, another tore ... car's windscreen, and ... bours report that two nc... rowly missed bystander...

Finally scooped ... police, Dutt was form... ged under Section 3... Indian Penal Code a...



Dutt: trigger-ha...

ted. A bail bond an... later, he was scot-fre... the police relieved h... gun. Reliving scree... was obviously not as p... he expected. And he ... wasn't much more su... screen than on.

SIGN POS...

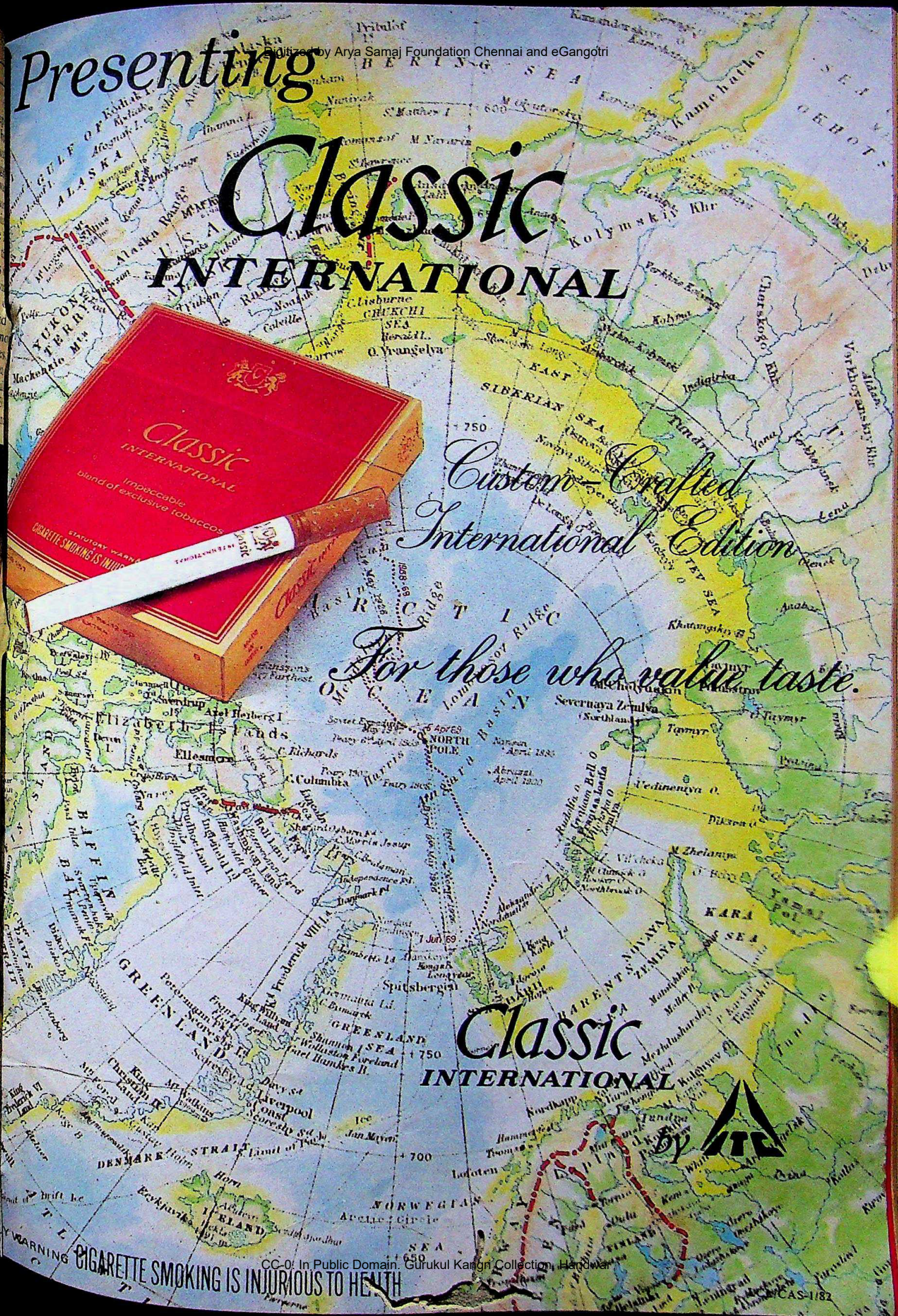
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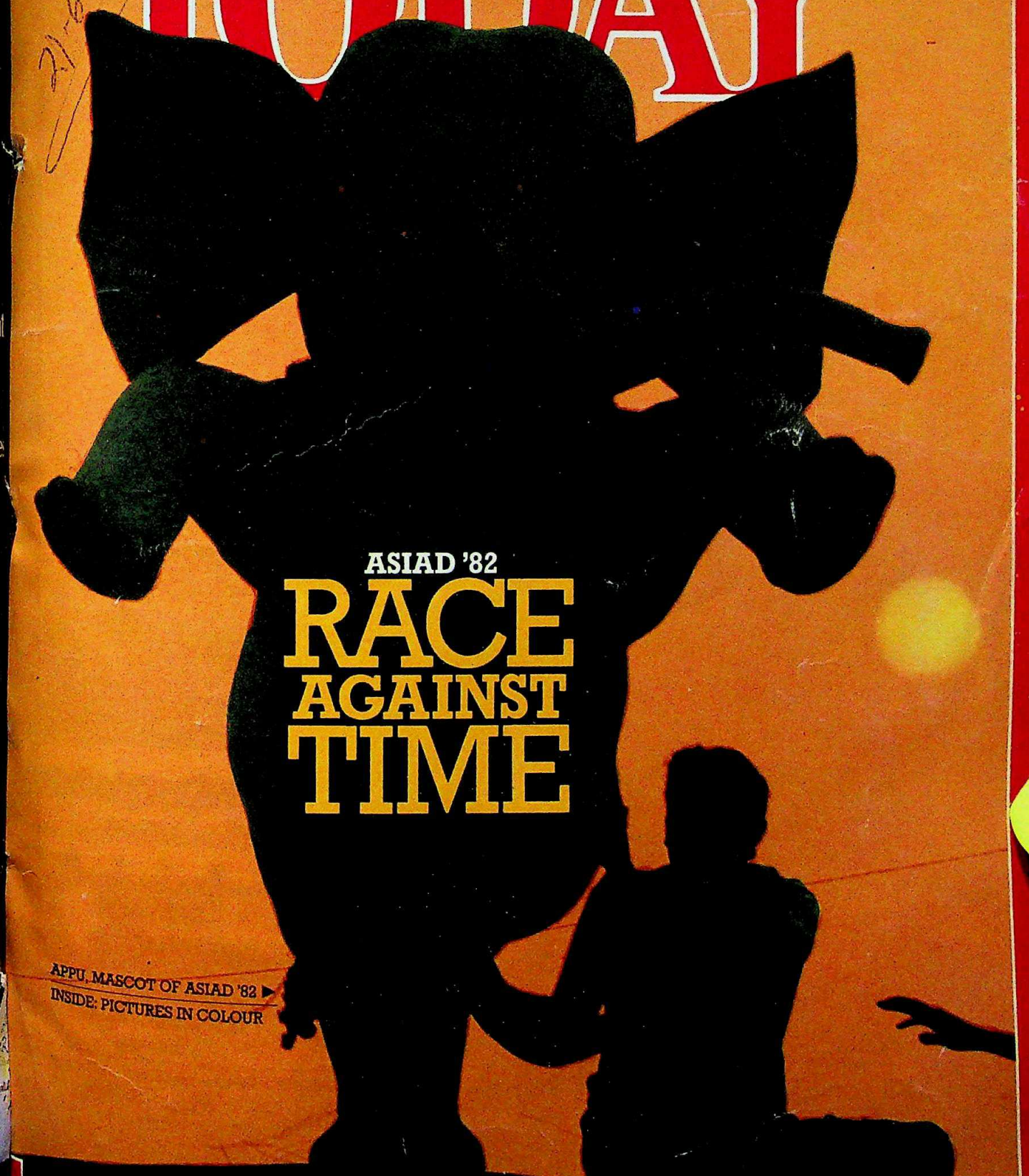
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

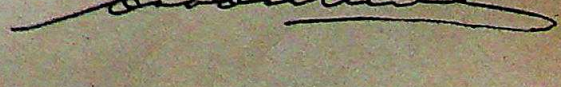
EVERY story has two sides, even though that may not always be evident. And, it is often a difficult, even delicate task for the media to make sure that both sides of a story are presented to readers to help them make up their minds about any issue or controversy. Thus, most of the reporting that has occurred about the Asian Games has been about the controversies that have surrounded it. INDIA TODAY *has devoted due attention to them ever since the preparation for the Games got under way in earnest two years ago. In about half a dozen separate articles since then, it has tracked the Games from the uncertainties of the Janata-Lok Dal period, through the initial hesitant decision-making after the change of government in early 1980 to the high pressure, all-systems-go approach which has characterised the Games' preparations in recent months.*

While a project of such magnitude has inevitably kicked up dust, the controversies have obscured an underlying fact. The creation of such large-scale facilities in a relatively short period has been an undeniable achievement in a country known more for cost over-runs and slipped schedules. It was to focus on this little realised achievement that INDIA TODAY *decided to feature the preparation for the Asian Games on its cover. To write about the projects Senior Writer* DILIP BOBB *and Correspondent* ASOKA RAINA *toured the newly built and upcoming facilities in the capital, while* JAGANNATH DUBASHI *visited Patiala, arguably the country's sports capital, where a wide cross-section of training camps are being held to select those who will represent India on the track and in the fields.*

But, as every story has two sides, there are the less savoury aspects of the Games' preparations. To investigate the controversies surrounding the project, Correspondent PRABHU CHAWLA *scoured his contacts within the local government and outside to look at the dirt behind the facade.*

Obviously a story of this kind has a tremendous visual impact. Picture Editor RAGHU RAI *donned his hard hat and spent several hours tramping through the Games' facilities. Then, in order to get a bird's-eye view—quite literally—he climbed into a helicopter for an aerial tour of the capital to capture its rapidly changing profile. Meanwhile, Photographer* BHAWAN SINGH *covered the training in progress at Patiala. The result is another pictorial portfolio in colour, a new feature of the magazine which has drawn enthusiastic response from readers.*

THE ISSUE features visuals of another kind in the photo feature on the grand palaces of Hyderabad. To do the feature, Correspondent SUNIL SETHI *battled not a few inhibitions to gain access to the very private quarters of people who are accustomed to guarding their privacy. Photographer* PRAMOD PUSHKARNA*'s wide-ranging lens captures the fast fading nostalgia of a regal past.*



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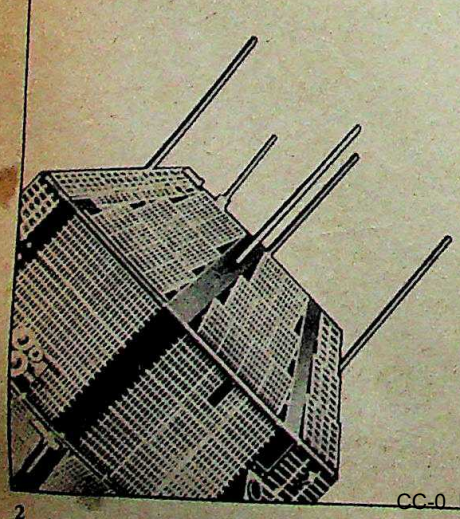
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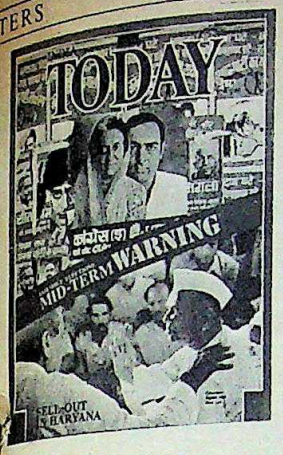
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NTS TO PONDER

"Mid-term Warning" (June 15) effec- brought home the lessons the gress(I) has to learn from the Assembly tions. But judging from the events in ana the lesson is obviously too late for earning.

bay *S.G. Agte*

The outcome of these elections has ed conclusively that the slogans of ibi Hatao", stable government and the oint programme just do not work any- e. For the first time the chances of ratiya Janata Party seem good.

Delhi *Ramanand Sharma*

SCIENCE AROUSED

The photo feature "A World Apart" 15) was shocking. It is a tragedy that se of the inability of the Government ovide money, manpower and facilities atients of Asia's largest mental hospital eing treated so inhumanly. Let us hope this rouses the concerned authorities.

ndrum *R.V. Venkataraman*

was enraged to read about the mental tal at Ranchi. The civilisation that we of will of be little use unless we prove ords with action. When will our poli- s stop delivering lectures and start something concrete.

alore *Radhika Deenalu*

After reading this extremely touching e it occurred to me that all of us should a fund to provide the mental hospital the equipment they need. When the rnment does not work, citizens must over their duties.

tta *K.K. Sharma*

ERS OF OBSERVATION

n "Eye-catchers" (June 15) it was writ- at the Bhutto brothers have managed ag a brace of birds, of the two-legged y, that is". Does INDIA TODAY know of ther variety?

ndrum *Sajan Venniyoor*

OUT OF PLACE

The burkha was devised originally to protect the wearer from the heat and sand of the Arabian desert and was the counterpart of the Arab man's long gown and keffiyeh. Both these are entirely unsuitable for the hot and humid Indian subcontinent. Pakistani authorities should remember this while advocating "Back To The Burkha" (June 15).

Calcutta *Parveen Ziauddin*

SHIELDED BY SECRECY

"Losing Political Momentum" (June 15) makes it extremely clear that the US today is in an economic mess. The other thing it makes clear is that America's open society is one of its major drawbacks. The Soviet Union and all its allies are in a bigger economic mess but because hard facts are scarce they are always given the benefit of the doubt. This is, I guess, just one of the many advantages of the Iron Curtain.

Calcutta *K. Susrita*

HIMALAYAN TRAVERSE

I am sure I am not the only one who felt like applauding after reading about the Trans-Himalayan expedition ("The Long March", June 15) by the four gutsy men

Chandigarh *Neeraj Bali*

■ I was astonished to read that no other expedition had spent more than four months in the Himalayas and this small team spent more than 15 months there.

New Delhi *Puneet Kochar*

THE VIEW FROM ABROAD

Indians like myself who sorely miss the homeland welcome INDIA TODAY's International Edition with all our hearts. We are particularly happy to see the high standard of journalism, design and production. The extensive coverage gives us a panoramic view of what is happening in the country.

Boston, USA *Sidhartha Ghose*

MEDIOCRE MEDIUM

Doordarshan is in a seller's market and we the hapless public have to be satisfied with whatever it dishes out ("The Tedium Is The Message", May 31). In spite of having been around for quite a number of years, Doordarshan is trailing behind developing countries who came into the fray later.

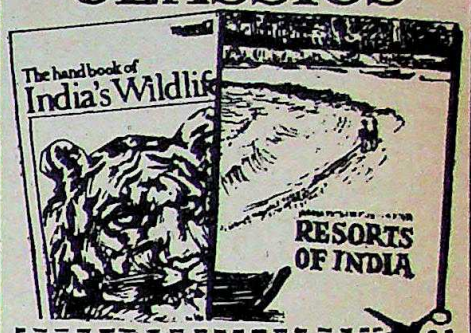
New Delhi *K.S. Raman*

■ With V.P. Sathe's TV, whether colour or black and white, tedium is the message and boredom is the affliction.

Bombay *Sudhir Malhotra*

■ The article ignored a very important aspect. It is not only equipment or bureauc-

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rats who are at fault but the people who work on the programmes. According to Kamaleshwar: "As things stand 70 per cent of staff is deadwood, there is no aptitude or will to scout around..." (*Evening News*, February 3, 1981). Till this deadwood is removed nothing can help Doordarshan.
New Delhi *Ravinder Mehta*

■ Doordarshan should be rechristened Boredarshan.
New Delhi *N.M.K. Menon*

■ It would seem that Sathe is all for taking the best of western technology and then utilising it for the establishment of a Soviet-type propaganda machine. That really is the best of both worlds.
Calcutta *Raju Bala*

TRUE TO EXPECTATIONS

In "Nobody's Stooge" (May 31) Mrs Gandhi has said nothing new and in disclaiming a special relationship with the Soviet Union she is doing nothing unusual—even Babrak Karmal would not openly proclaim himself the stooge of the Soviet Union.
Calcutta *Sujash Kumar*

■ We feel as much displeasure as Mrs Gandhi does about the state of the education system in the country. But as prime minister, she should start doing something to rectify the situation rather than just putting her displeasure on record.
Madras *R. Govindan*

FOR FREEDOM

It was a revelation to read "War Of The Air Waves" (May 31) about how some intellectuals of Europe are risking their lives to wage "radio warfare" in Afghanistan. Radio Free Afghanistan is a supreme example of how a few people who live by their ideals can strike a very effective blow for freedom.
New Delhi *Deepak Dadlani*

NEED FOR GIVE AND TAKE

The exhaustive investigative report on Punjab "Harvest Of Hatred" (May 31) made for painful reading. The conflict is a recent one and one that is being encouraged by vested interests. Let us hope that sense will prevail and harmony will return.
Secunderabad *Balwant Singh*

■ If meat can be banned in Hardwar because it is the holy city of the Hindus then why is there a protest when the Sikhs want a ban on tobacco in Amritsar? But what is really disturbing is that it is slowly becoming clear that the Government's aim is to keep Sikhs occupied with these minor matters to divert their attentions from their true grievances. These tactics are negative and only recoil on the Government.
Bangalore *Inder Mohan*

■ The author has toed the familiar finding a foreign hand behind every bance. Whether the conflict is Muslim or Hindu-Sikh, the foreign ever present. Does it not reflect very on Indians who can be manipu outsiders at will?
Lucknow *Seem*

NEW HIGH IN BARBARITY

The special feature "Dance Of (May 31) was well balanced and prejudice. With the killings taking p before the elections, it was remarka the West Bengal Government conde outright and instituted an enquiry.
Hooghly *Ashok Kumar*

■ This ghastly incident has surpa barbarous acts in living memory. W the reasons were, the incident bri sharp focus the fact that mobs can t law into their own hands at any tim
Naihati *Pankaj*

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIV

"Britain's Last Stand" (May 31) the Falklands was like a whiff of fre after the biased reporting in the media. The dependence that the media has shown on western sources as the fact that the Argentinian Embas to buy space in the newspapers to a the Indian public with their side mat wonder whether we are still not a
New Delhi *Vasant G*

■ The article was a gross exam writing for the public. How can the whose resident population are Briti man and have been for the last 20 possibly be Argentina's? If a foreign invaded the Andamans would the Government stand by impotently? T is that Argentina was the aggressor British Government has been forced expensive, unwanted but necessary
London, UK *Richar*



In the "Prolonging Agony" (M the picture not that of Minister of St Home Affairs Lasker.
New Delhi *A.D. Ma*

The error is regretted.

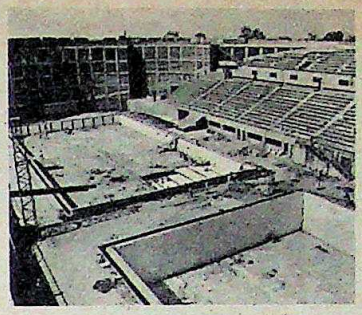
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: BY RAGHU RAI



COVER STORY: In exactly five months, India will stage what is the country's most ambitious undertaking to date—the IX Asiad. Dogged by controversy since its inception, projects for Asiad '82 finally got off to a belated start and as a result of some frenetic effort, are finally nearing completion. A look at the saga of the Asiad, the men behind its conception, its controversies and the athletic fare that will be on display. Page 66



CURRENT EVENTS: Two months ago customs officials were rejoicing over the capture of India's kingpin smuggler Sukur Naran Bakhia. But their triumph was short-lived. Bakhia broke out of the Fort Aguada prison in Goa, almost under the vigilant noses of police officials. The escape triggered off a massive man-hunt, but after two weeks the police was no closer to trapping the smuggler. An on the spot report. **Page 27**



NEIGHBOURS: The Tiger movement which started off as an extremist wing of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), in Sri Lanka has acquired the notoriety of a terrorist organisation. It has been responsible for the murder of leading Tamil leaders and has an endless list of charges of robberies and riots. Working from dossiers of two prominent and particularly dangerous members of the group, a report on the dreaded Tiger movement. **Page 50**



SPECIAL REPORT: The amazing survival saga of Bhajan Lal, the Haryana chief minister, and his remarkable capacity to win support and buy MLAs have focused national attention on this short, podgy man who was a mere commission agent at a village grain market till he joined politics. This fortnight, as the newly-elected Haryana Assembly goes into session, a final verdict will be available on whether Bhajan Lal would continue in office. A profile of the man. **Page 78**



PHOTO FEATURE: In the hurly-burly of the modern city of Hyderabad, stand the dream palaces of the past. And living in these resplendent sprawling buildings are a few aristocratic survivors of the period of princes and princesses. For them the memories of their glorious past die hard. A searching report with exclusive pictures. **Page 90**



ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY: The Government has progressively liberalised its industrial and foreign investment policies, leaving the field more open now than ever before. But what has been the result of the policy changes over the past two years? Have they achieved the objectives that were set out? An in-depth analysis, plus an interview with Industry Minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari. **Page 110**

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FIRST CLASS. FIRST RANK



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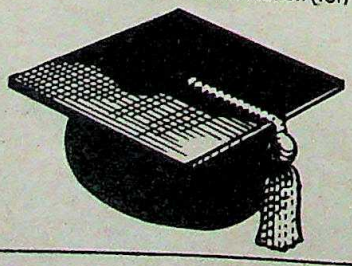
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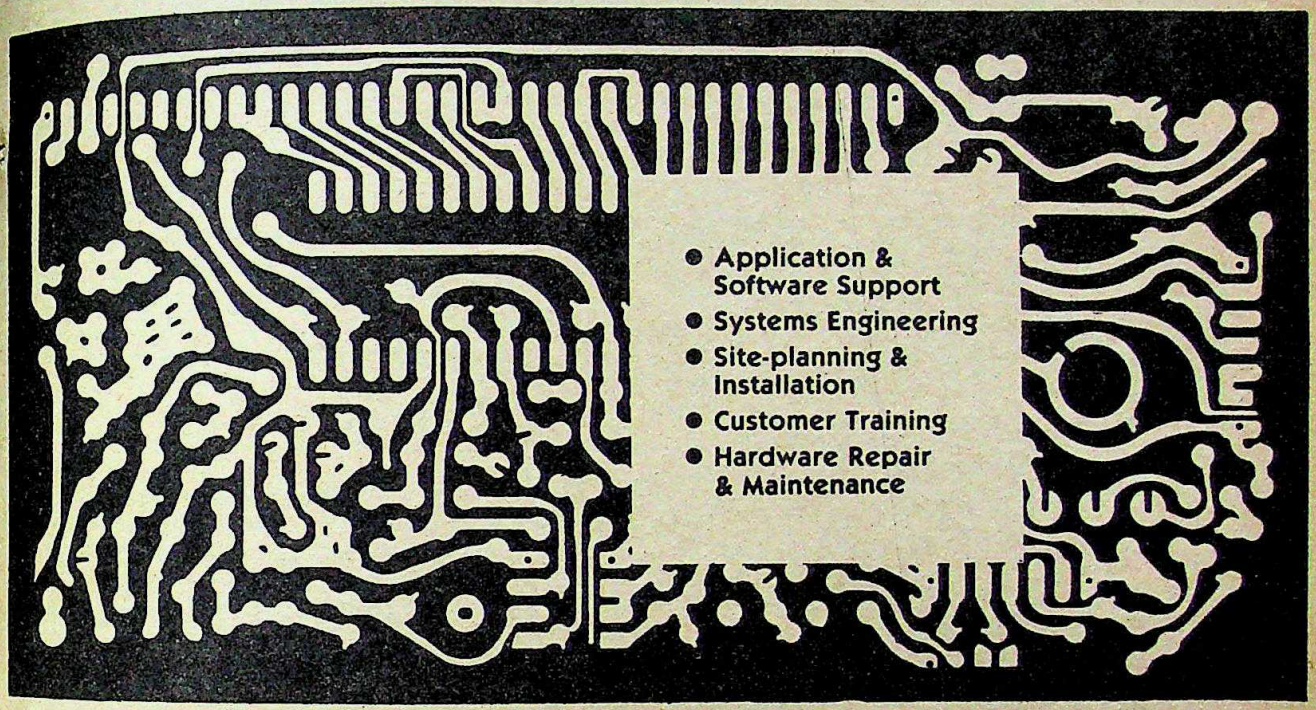
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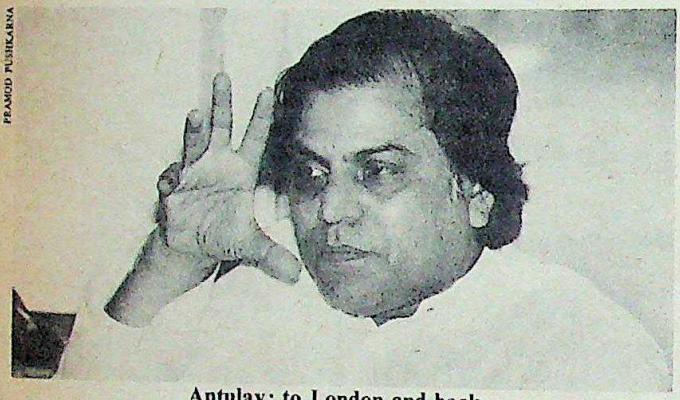
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PRESIDENTS IN WAITING

THE RULING party's choice of presidential candidates has narrowed down to three names: Home Minister Zail Singh, Foreign Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Professor N.G. Ranga, the 82-year-old Oxford educated Congress(I) MP, with former vice-president B.D. Jatti reportedly waiting in the wings. Observers however rule out Ranga's chances on account of his advanced years. Rao, 61, thought to be an intellectual, has of late not been all that much of a success as foreign minister. Mrs Gandhi has been taking important policy decisions herself, leaving precious little for Rao to do which is perhaps why she may want to push him upstairs. The latest entrant to the presidential sweepstakes is the turbaned, bespectacled home minister.


PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Antulay: to London and back

ANTULAY GOES TO SCHOOL

LATE last month when Maharashtra's notorious former chief minister, A.R. Antulay, disappeared for a week the state capital was rife with rumour. Even his close associates were unaware of his whereabouts though an attempt was made to put about the story that he had gone to his lavish new residence in Ambet. As speculation about possible destinations grew his nephew-secretary Mushtaque, answered persistent queries belligerently: "It's none of your business where he has gone. You cannot force me to tell you." But by the end of last fortnight Antulay surfaced and let the cat out of the bag himself: he had been in London to admit his 15-year-old son into the International School there.

The interesting aspect of the trip was that his host in London was Nirmal Sethia, an expatriate Indian businessman who was inextricably linked with the charges that forced Antulay out of office. Admitted Antulay: "Of course, I stayed with him. Why should I not accept the hospitality of Nirmal Sethia? He's a very close friend of mine and he's a much more respectable citizen than all of you feel." When asked about the rumour that he had stopped off in Dubai to see his other friends, the Galadari brothers, he replied plaintively: "I went only to get my son Naveed's admission and never went to any other country besides Britain. Since when is the Indian press interested in a father's concern for his son's education?"

COURTESY CALL

THE CARNEGIE Endowment for International Peace is sponsoring a high-level private conference on Indo-American relations later this month. India will be represented at the Wisconsin meeting by a nine-member delegation which includes G. Parthasarathy, close adviser to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on foreign policy matters, T.N. Kaul, former ambassador to Moscow as well as to Washington, K. Subrahmanyam, director, Institute Defence Studies and Analyses, and Girilal Jain, editor, *The T of India*. The conference comes, quite fortuitously, a few w before Mrs Gandhi's visit to the United States scheduled for month, and has become part of the build-up to the visit.

THE WOES OF MEDAK

MEDAK, the parliamentary constituency in the backw Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh which sent Mrs Gan to the Lok Sabha, is languishing in utter neglect. The prime mi used to nurse her earlier constituency Rae Bareli with great c Yashpal Kapoor, and later Makhan Lal Fotedar, looked after Bareli on her behalf. Strangely enough, Mrs Gandhi does not se to be taking much interest in Medak.

So far, she hasn't bothered to appoint anyone to look after place on her behalf. Precious little has been done there, and the industries that recently came up in the area did not create any for the locals. Which has set people in Hyderabad and D wondering whether Mrs Gandhi has decided to ditch Medak next election. She cannot cite a single good reason why the peop Medak should vote for her again in 1985.

A TROUBLESHOOTER ARRIVES

FOR THE last two years, India's major intelligence agencies the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Intelli Bureau (IB) have been hamstrung by internal strife, strikes and court cases over the questi recruitment, cadre review promotions. Last fortnight Government finally decided do something about the cr situation by assigning Sankaran Nair, former de chief of RAW, to look into matter and suggest remedi

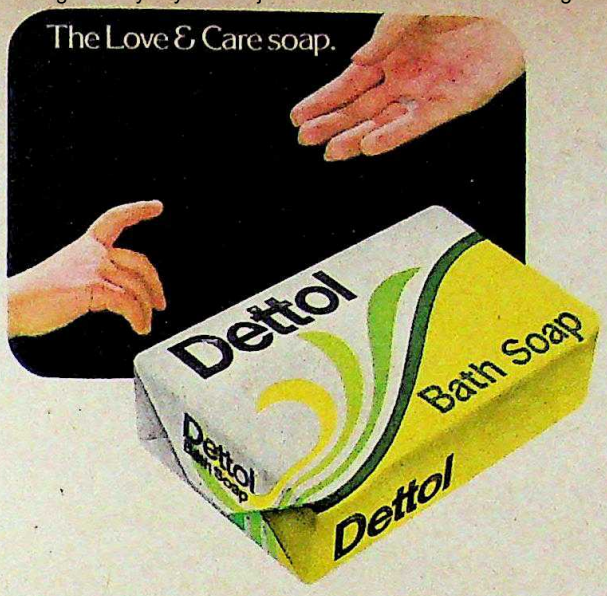

BHAWAN SINGH

Nair: critical mission

Nair, who is currently the Special Organi Committee for the Asiad, been given a two assignment, starting month. He will have a sepa office and staff to assist him examining the entire questio recruitment, promotions in personnel matters in intelligence agencies.

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I do not belong to any political party, yet I am very much in the political field.
—*Mrs Maneka Gandhi speaking to newsmen in Amritsar*

The Left Front Government is sworn in at the Governor's House (in Calcutta) ch falls in a Congress(I) constituency, holds office at Writers' Building in a gress(I) constituency; and will make laws at the Assembly House in a Congress(I) stituency again.
—*A letter in the* Ananda Bazar Patrika

I (don't) see the need for forming a separate forum for propagating Sanjay dhi's ideals. —*Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Bhavanam Venkatram in* Current

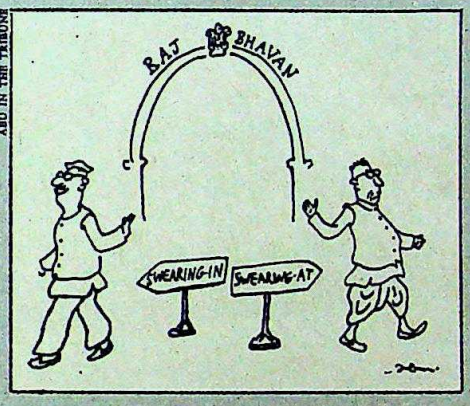
Babus cloistered in secretariats can never make or promote a language. ges are made by the people, in the bazar.
—*B.G. Verghese in* The Illustrated Weekly of India

One does not use a ball that has lost its shine.
—*H.N. Bahuguna on Mrs Gandhi's decision not to send Rajiv Gandhi to campaign in Garhwal in* The Sunday Observer

He (Madhavrao) knew that Indira (Gandhi) was going to win the '80 election and anted to back the winning horse. Even if that horse had kicked us in the face.
—*Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia about her son joining the Congress (I) in* Society

As a young widow they (the Gandhi usehold) could have shown her aneka) more concern. They are as inary as people who burn brides.
—*A housewife in* Celebrity

I was an outsider (in Doordarshan). ple at the top of the hierarchy were ppy at my being appointed as the ditional general... They take work as a eer...
—*Kamleshwar in* Onlooker



The moment she (Lata Mangeshkar) s real talent she goes out of her way to otage her/him.
—*Sharda in* Stardust

I believe that I have changed the conception of the vamp (in Hindi films).
—*Kalpana Iyer in* Eve's Weekly

(I enjoy)... a good swim. A good cigar. A good...! Why make any bones about
—*Danseuse Sonal Mansingh in* The Express Magazine

It is music that gives blood, breath and body to the Indian cinema.
—*N.N. Sippy in* Blitz

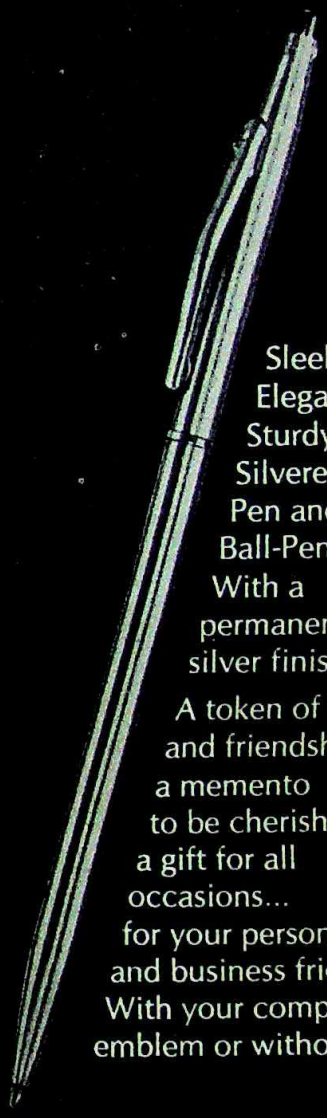
She (Rekha) has great sex appeal. My God! she has only to look at you and she elerates your heartbeat.
—*Shammi Kapoor in* Super

In India, alliances of political parties are of no political value... When Mr Charan gh... talks of political ethics, political morality or even constitutional propriety, he kes the devil laugh.
—*A letter to the editor in* The Indian Express

...like the Lok Dal, the Congress(I) in Haryana, too, is little more than a lection of individuals who cannot be expected to stay together even briefly without adhesive of power and all that goes with it.
—*Girilal Jain in* The Times of India

I don't know what the people think of me but I am sure that when I am on the ound my father does not score the runs for me.
—*Cricketer Kirti Azad in* Weekend Review

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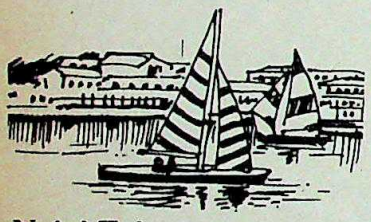
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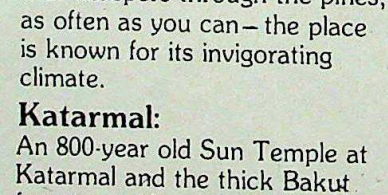
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Baijnath:

Before the grandeur of Kausani goes to your head, take another dose of the Almighty's medicine. Visit the group of temples especially that of Vishnu and the 12th century relics at Baijnath in the Garud Valley. Then go across to Bageshwar which is associated with Shiva.

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Champavat:

And now a dose of Champawat, the one time capital of Chand Rajas, Lohaghat nearby, a centre of historical and mythological importance and Abbot Mount standing 200 metres high and ranking amongst the most noted spots for scenic beauty.

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TODDY TRAP

■ Some people prefer to get their liquor the hard way. One of them is a young fisherman from the coastal village of Thaikad', about 25 km from Alleppey, Kerala. He and his friend were passing by a canal, fishing nets slung over their shoulders, when they saw what poets would call damsels, swimming leisurely in the canal. On the spur of the romantic moment, one young man offered the other a bottle of toddy if he would trap one damsel in his net. Whether it was the lure of the toddy or the novelty of actually catching females in a net, the young man rolled up his sleeves, unrolled his net and got to work.

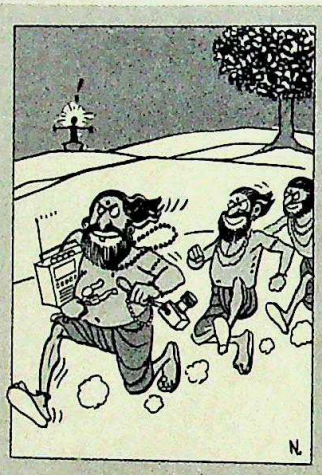
With a gentle hiss, the net swung out over the water. In one smooth motion, it settled accurately on one girl, who thrashed about, but to no



avail. Inexorably, she drawn into its coils, drawn firmly to the There, she stood bewil and not a little angry, the young man untangle from the strings. As soo she was released, she away, free as a gazelle; hours later, the police but were not able to find young daredevil who w then drowning his achi ment in toddy.

UNHOLY SCHEME

■ Of all the schemes invented to part a fool from his money, the one that a 'sadhu' of Delhi thought up is surely one of the best. It worked like this: the sadhu would hold audience under a shady tree, discoursing on God to wonder-struck disciples. When they saw a likely fool ambling close by, one of the gang would go to him and ask him the time of day, or directions, or the number of a bus



going to such and such a place. Then he would walk with him for a few yards.

At the strategic moment, the sadhu would unleash one of his disciples, who would stagger along for 15 steps at the end of which marathon he would see God—just as the great man had told him he would. All this time, the accomplice who had asked for directions would be pouring a litany of praise concerning the sadhu into the target's ear. Thus softened, the target would willingly leave all belongings at the sadhu's and set out on the Marc

Fifteen steps later, no God in sight, the after instant bliss would turally turn around to what his mentor had to about this—to discover he, and his disciples, had ken another road to bliss. of that bliss included, acc ing to the police, two recorders, a radio, six tches, five gold rings a camera.

CHECK MATE

■ The famous Sri Krishna temple in Guruvayur is beginning to acquire quite a reputation. Two wedding programmes at the 'kalyanamandapam' have degenerated into melodramas of the south Indian film industry kind. The first took place when a marriage party screeched to a halt at the temple, rootin', hootin' and tootin.

When the bridegroom took his position and looked down into the dewy eyes of his bride, he discovered that there had been a switch—the girl he had approved, and who had approved of him at that cosy encounter some time ago, was not this blushing thing waiting to tie the knot. The blushes could not melt his outraged heart and a considerable amount of shouting and screaming ensued before he

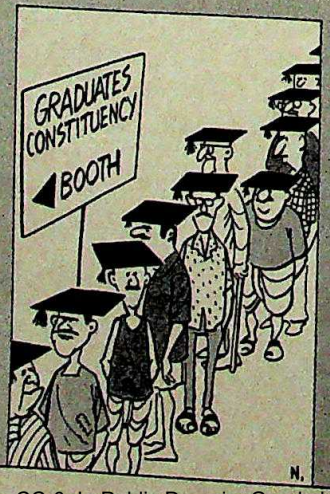


was able to get away.

A week later, and hopeful arrived ting—only to find that his wife had got there before with no sign of the sc bride. The wife was ac panied by a sea of rel and friends, and seemed noyed about something shouts and screams, and time the priests got sick o and booted everybody o the temple.

LITERARY RACE

■ Elections are the bane of a politician's life: every once in a while, he has to get a fresh mandate from the people. The ideal situation for him would of course be to choose his own voters, ensuring victory every time. And this is exactly what happened in the run-up to the elections to the Karnataka Legislative Council from the Bangalore graduates constituency, scheduled for June 8.



Every candidate feverishly tried to outdo the other in adding graduate after graduate to the voters' list.

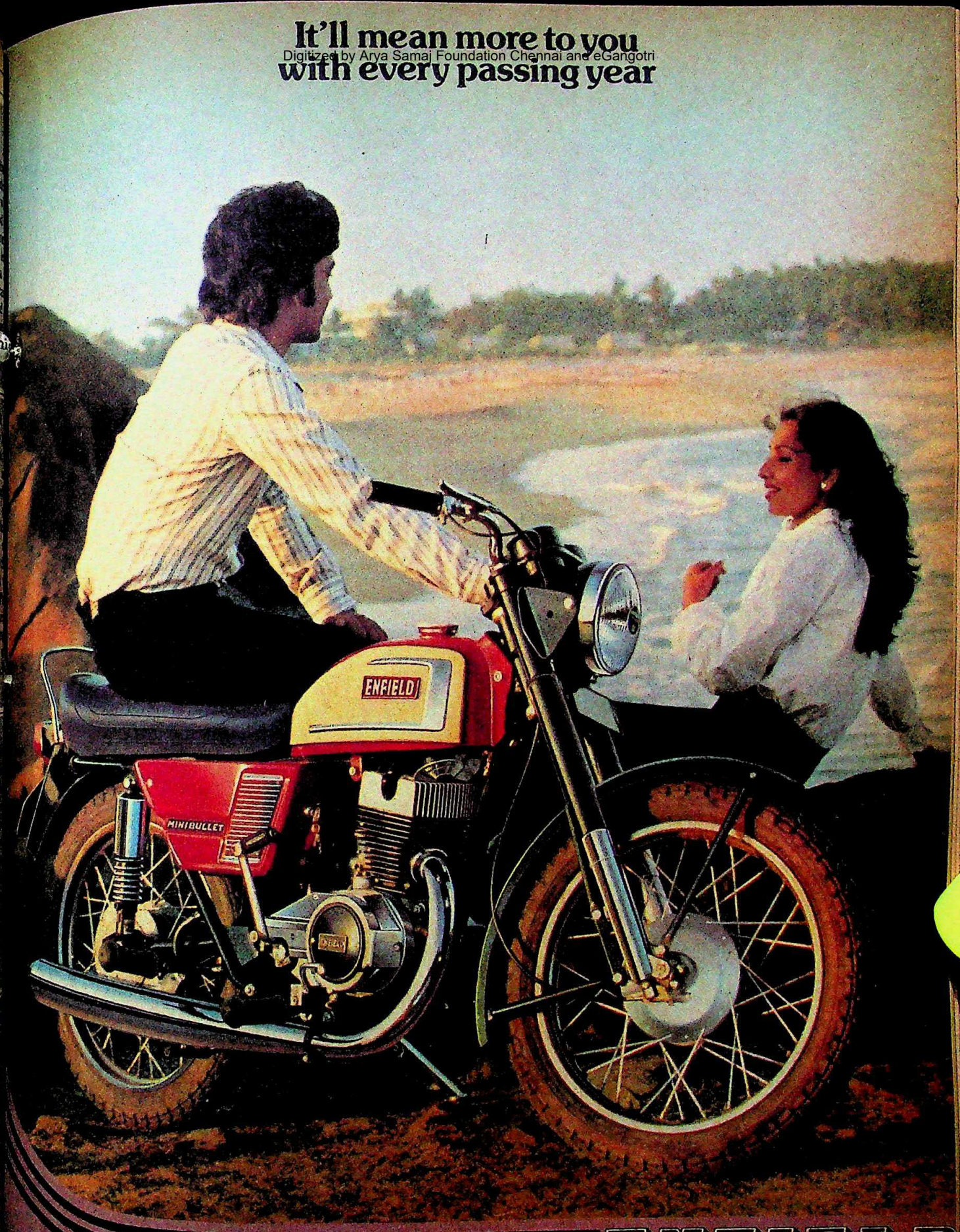
As all that is required for a person to be registered as a graduate is a legislator's thumb-print, the candidates found the going easy and the graduates poured in, in all shapes and sizes, ranging from off the street illiterates to diploma holders. K.R. Mukund appears nine times in the list; Parvathi, daughter of A.I. Anantharamaiah, 12 tim

The best part of the is that the legislator's ficate is adequate proof according to electoral law defects in the list cannot questioned. As no ind ink is used in this elec K.R. Mukund and his clones will have nine Until the system's loop are plugged before the election, it's carnival time politicians and their lit platoons.

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ENFIELD

MINI BULLET

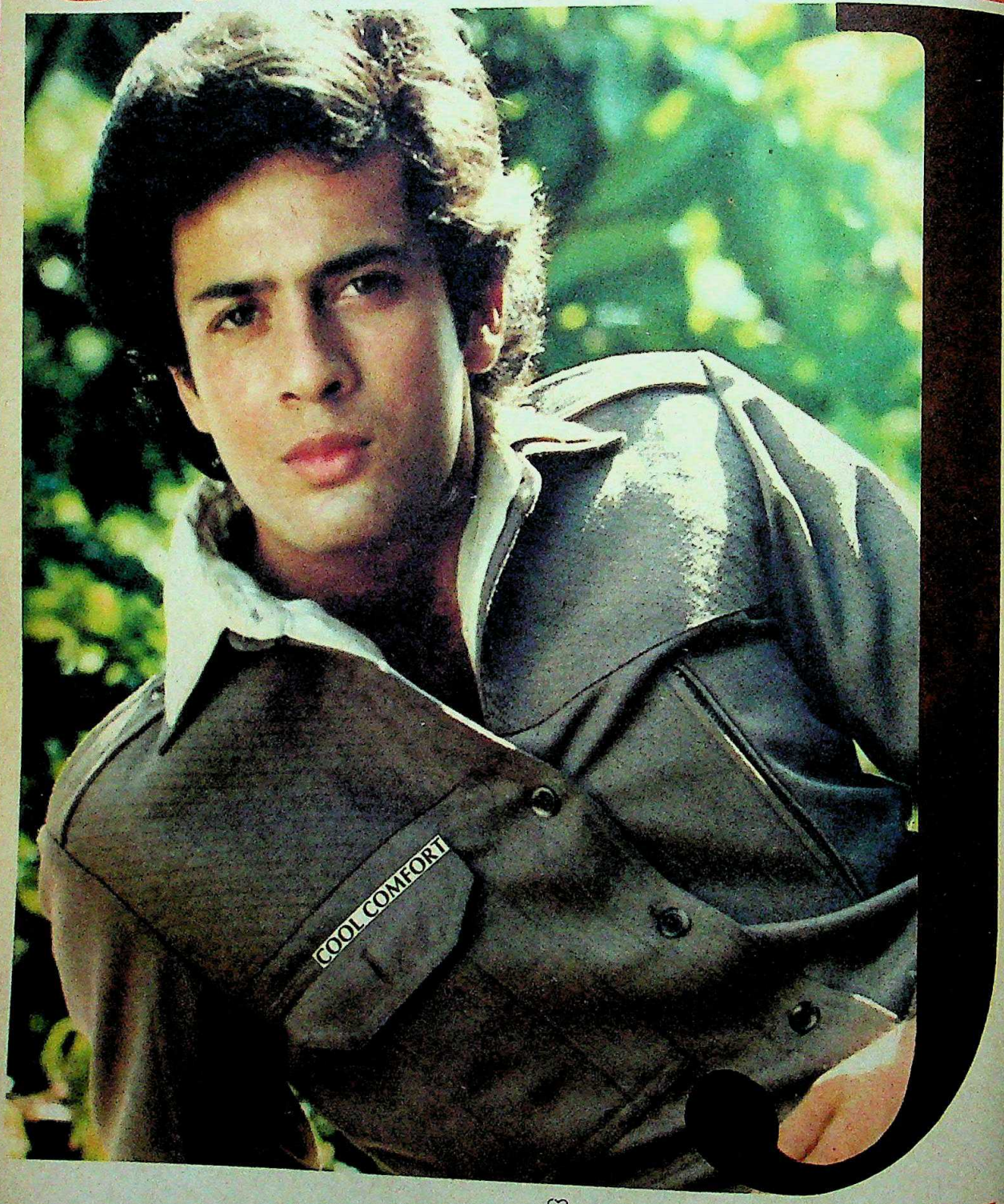
Bullet blood runs in it.

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RESS(I)

ime For Taking Stock

IKE the commander-in-chief of an army that has suffered a few unexpected setbacks on the battle front, Mrs Gandhi was back in her tions room' last fortnight trying to what to do with her 'generals' in the states. There can be no two opinions that her image has been tarnished the recent assembly elections. Of reat importance to the prime minister e eight chief ministers whose states over 350 MP's to Parliament. Her eyes o doubt, set on the 1985 parliamentary and her mind on ways and means to a possible debacle. Karnataka and ra Pradesh go to the polls in 1983.

Mrs Gandhi's efforts to put her party's in order has also coincided with the ar completion in office of six chief ers: V.P. Singh (Uttar Pradesh), nath Mishra (Bihar), J.B. Patnaik a), Madhavsinh Solanki (Gujarat), Singh (Madhya Pradesh) and ara Singh (Punjab). "Twenty-four mo- are enough for any ordinary chief to show results," says an official of ngress(I), "it is ultimately his perfor- that will influence the outcome of the ns in his state."

crutiny: In ordering a review of her inisters' performance Mrs Gandhi set cific guidelines. But the parameters are to be wide-ranging including the nt programme, law and order, party nd economic performances.

ate governments are obviously aware for in spite of warnings from the not to indulge in expensive publicity es, they have already started advertis- heir second anniversary in style. i, Darbara Singh and Arjun Singh o New Delhi last fortnight to apprise ntre of the affairs of their respective Public relations officers of the various have already been briefed about step- p development-oriented handouts to the press. The chief ministers themselves are going all out to trumpet success stories. Said Uttar Pradesh's V.P. Singh: "Our government has created an all-time record by lifting power cuts. Through our Udyog Bandhu, we have established 20,400 new industrial units." Patnaik of Orissa was more modest in his claims. Says he: "We have created a favourable industrial climate in the country. All the big industrial houses are now setting up their units in this backward state." Other chief ministers echo the same theme.

However, the Prime Minister's Secretariat hasn't been particularly impressed by these statistics. Mrs Gandhi herself has kept abreast of developments in these states by making periodic visits and conducting on-the-spot enquiries. Her visits to the states have been followed up by senior officials from New Delhi—who go into problem areas to provide the necessary impetus. For instance, Cabinet Secretary Krishnaswamy Rao Saheb visited Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in early June to discuss improvement strategy. Other recent emissaries from New Delhi include Home Secretary T.N. Chaturvedi, Power Secretary Satish Chandran and Heavy Industry Secretary D.V. Kapoor. Besides, there is a ceaseless flow of reports from the AICC(I) offices. A preliminary assessment of areas of weakness has already been made. According to sources, the High Command feels that:


RAGHU RAI

► There is scope for further improvement in power generation in all the four states of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

► The weaker and minority communities are increasingly feeling insecure in states like Punjab and Gujarat.

► There are shortcomings in infrastructural facilities in all states.

► There is not enough attention paid to the generation of internal resources to finance new non-plan development schemes in any of them.

► While the chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar have been able to patch up with their adversaries within the party, the chief ministers of Orissa, Gujarat and Punjab have not succeeded in wooing dissidents. Even in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the fight between ministers and party workers has assumed serious proportions.

► Corruption charges against many ministers in Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Gujarat have lessened the credibility of the Government.

Categories: In fact the six chief ministers could be fitted into two neat categories:

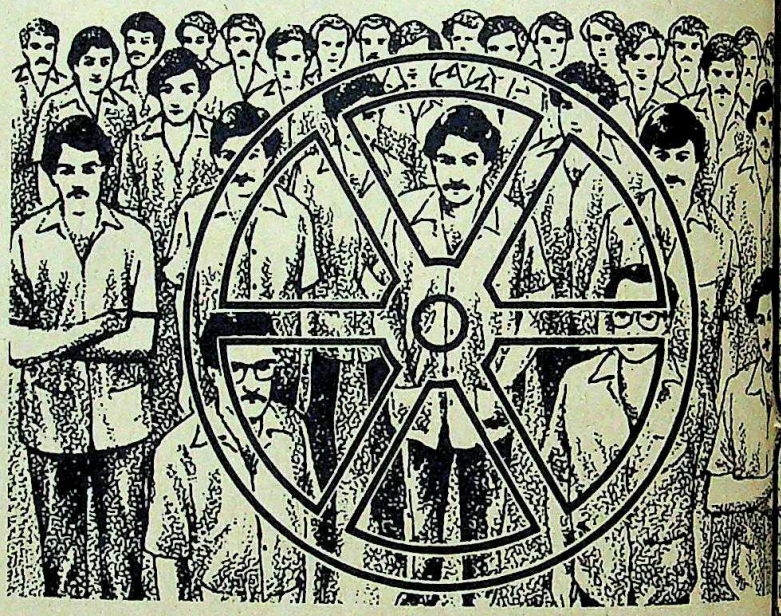
ndhi (above) and (below, from left) V.P. Singh, Mishra, Patnaik, Solanki, Arjun Singh and Darbara Singh: putting the house in order



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ith a clean image and a dismal record formance and vice versa. V.P. Singh, Singh and Darbara Singh fall in the tegory while Mishra, Patnaik and belong to the second. Yet this is no tee of any change in the offing. Says : "It is a very tricky situation. All the inisters have something to their cre- t is believed that Mrs Gandhi has sent instructions to the chief s to tone up the administrative

have also been a considerable of transfers in recent weeks all aimed easing efficiency. In Uttar Pradesh for e over a dozen IAS officials including magistrates have been transferred. andhi has also warned all chief minis- to wash dirty linen in public on party . According to AICC(I) sources, Mrs i is convinced that the major factor sible for the Congress(I)'s poor show- the state assembly elections was the al strife in the Congress(I).

nce in all the six states, chief ministers ing some degree of dissident activity, directed all of them to sort out their nces without any further delay. When ra Singh ignored her directive and d Home Minister Giani Zail Singh at public meeting in Jullundur, she him up during his meeting with her on In Bihar as well, all factional leaders edar Pandey, A.P. Sharma, Bhishma Singh and Jagannath Mishra have sked to sink their differences and a united front.

hough she expects to curb dissident es, her major concern is no doubt the s of corruption faced by over 20 rs in all the six states. Two Cabinet rs in Uttar Pradesh, six in Orissa, n Madhya Pradesh, four in Gujarat e in Bihar are facing serious alle- s of graft. The opposition parties have xploiting the issue to the fullest. h Mrs Gandhi has conducted inde- t enquiries into these charges through ence agencies, the state governments ot been very cooperative in providing ation about the allegations. Further- he has also received a memorandum President Sanjiva Reddy about cor- charges against the chief ministers of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

the wake of mounting criticism, Mrs i is likely to direct all the chief minis- reshuffle their cabinets and drop some ministers of questionable integrity. the process has already begun. But ot question is: will a selective surgical on improve her party's image? If it then heads are bound to roll in round r two.

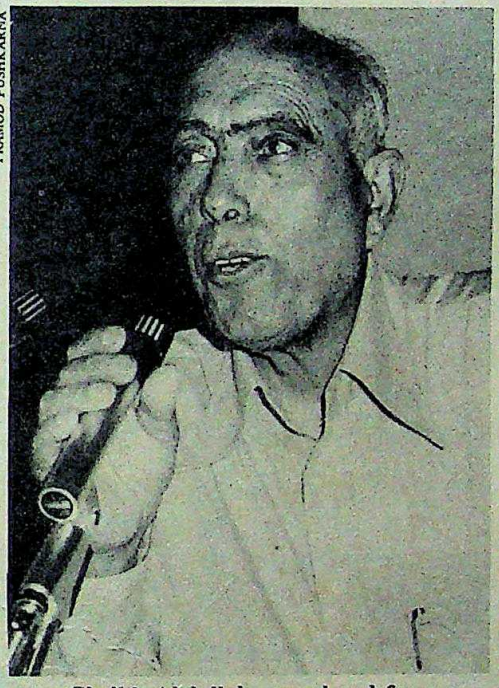
—PRABHU CHAWLA

J & K

Cracking The Whip



SRINAGAR's Hazratbal shrine has always been Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's favourite pulpit. From there, the ageing Lion of Kashmir has often issued his loudest roars in the unending feint-and-weave bout he has been fighting with an equally aggressive Centre. One of Kashmir's holiest Muslim spots, Hazratbal invariably amplifies the Sheikh's bluster, carrying it loud and clear to apprehensive ears in Delhi. Last fortnight, the Sheikh was at it again; his fiery speech at Friday prayers



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Sheikh Abdullah: sound and fury

in Hazratbal on May 28 set nerves jangling across the country.

Cheered repeatedly by the congregation, the Sheikh said that Hindu communalists had always sought to reduce the Muslim majority in Kashmir. He drew a grim picture of a north Indian Hindu cabal poised to strip his state of its Muslim character. The Sheikh omitted to mention that thousands of Hindu refugee families who fled from Pakistan and are settled in Jammu province's border areas have been denied Kashmir citizenship, Assembly voting rights, and land ownership. It was natural, therefore, that the Sheikh's speech, coming in the wake of the controversial Resettlement Bill, led to fears that he wanted to allow as many Muslims as possible to return.

Intriguing Timing: What intrigued Kashmir-watchers was the timing of the speech. The Sheikh has always shone out as an extremely secular man; single-handedly, he stood against communal frenzy and mass sentiment in 1947 and argued for Kashmir's accession to India. Kashmir has also the distinction of never witnessing Hindu-Muslim riots even in an increasingly communalised India. The Sheikh's appeal to religion, therefore, seemed all the more ominous.

It was true that the Resettlement Bill could pave the way for Pakistani citizens of Kashmiri origin, living outside the Azad Kashmir area, to apply for re-entry into the state. The Centre was obviously planning to stall action on the Bill for as long as possible; Governor B.K. Nehru's referral of the Bill to India's Attorney-General only helped confirm this suspicion in Kashmiri minds. Moreover, there had been alarmed reactions from all the opposition parties; and even Army Chief General K.V. Krishna Rao said in Hyderabad on June 4 that the Bill would cause serious security problems.

At first sight, the Sheikh's speech seemed only to be a populist gimmick, designed to whip up emotions at a time when Srinagar was buzzing with rumours of elections being called in September this year, much ahead of the June 1983 schedule. Moreover, the Sheikh has never been averse to harping on the explosive mix of Islam and Pakistan when it suits his purpose. During the 1977 election campaign, his main planks had been the reopening of the Srinagar-Rawalpindi road, and the mischief brewing within the Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS) against Article 370 of the Constitution, which guarantees Kashmir a special and semi-autonomous status.

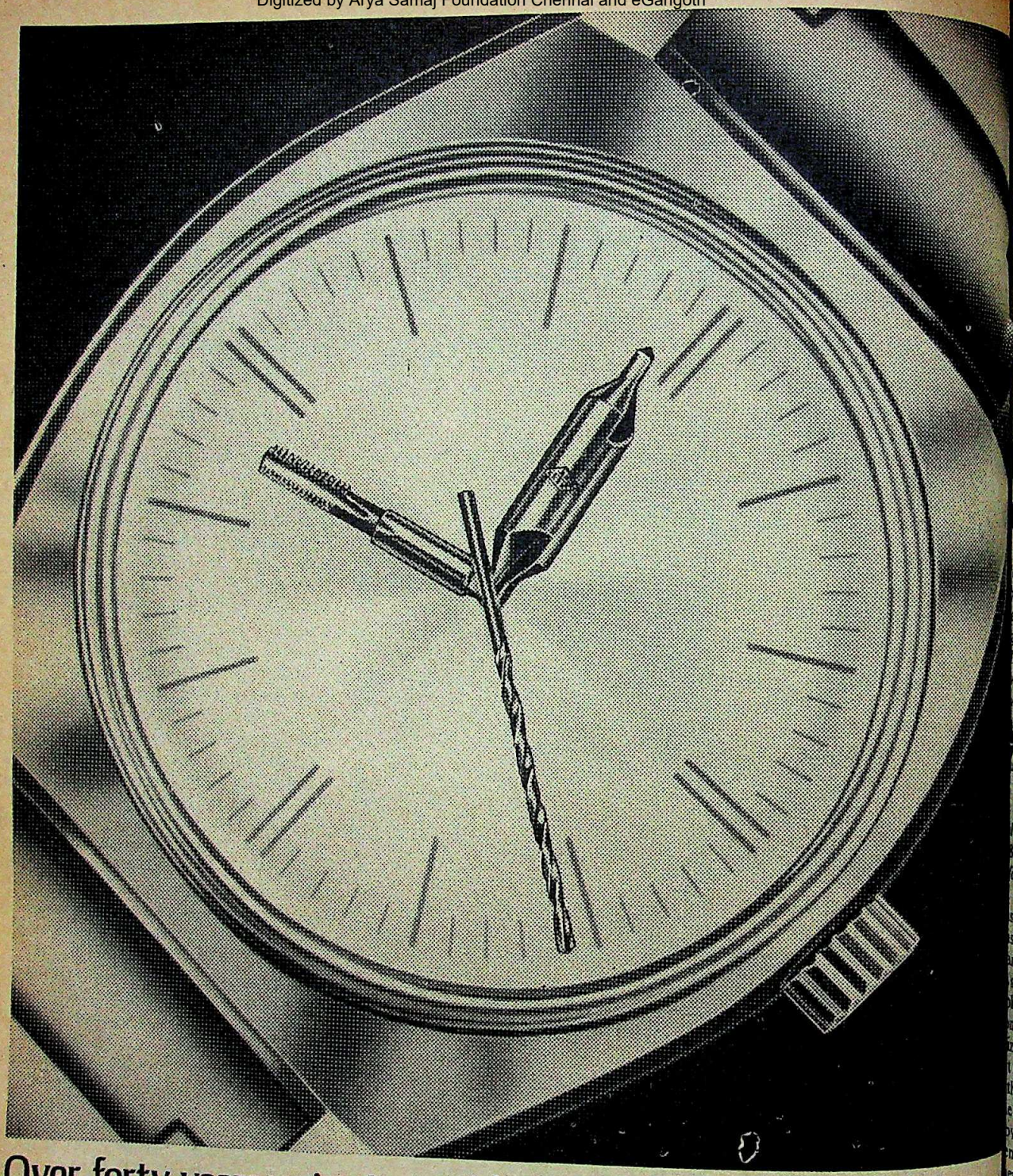
Provocative: Nevertheless, Delhi must have remembered August 17, 1980, when the Sheikh angrily compared the Moradabad deaths of Muslims at Id prayers to the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre. Srinagar had erupted in riots then; the Hazratbal speech therefore sounded all too provocative.

Indira Gandhi's government, however, has been equally guilty of provoking both the Sheikh as well as communal sentiments. In March last year, while touring the Jammu region, Mrs Gandhi had said that Kashmir's Hindu and Harijan minorities were in grave danger, and warned that communalism was afoot. The prime minister also lacks advisers of calibre on Kashmir—no longer does she have seasoned Kashmir handlers like D.P. Dhar, L.P. Singh, or P.N. Haksar.

But the Resettlement Bill by itself is not as catastrophic as it is made out to be. The

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proviso to Article 7 of the tion clearly says that the state leg- can enact laws to allow former s of Jammu and Kashmir now living tan to regain Indian citizenship. In if the Governor were to refuse assent Bill, the legislature can pass it and the state constitution lays down action would automatically render lawful. Even then, say ruling party n Srinagar, the Centre could appeal eme Court, challenging the Bill's constitutional validity.

Paranoia: All these disagreements, however, have only helped fuel Kashmir's paranoia about the state's status in India. The Sheikh is only articulating a Muslim "sub-nationalism" that often borders on sedition. The process of estrangement began in 1977, when the Congress abruptly withdrew support for the Sheikh, just two years after the Kashmir Accord had returned him to power and helped heal many of the scars of his 22-year exile. Says one of the state's seniormost ministers: "The 1977 elections split the electorate on religious lines. Naturally, the Sheikh was convinced that without Muslim support in the valley, he would have lost." It was significant that the Congress(I) and the Janata scored at that time only in Jammu and Ladakh; the only seat the National Conference won in the "Hindu" Jammu area was at Ramban, Finance Minister D.D. Thakur's stronghold.

As pressure rose to bursting point last fortnight, it seemed as though the Sheikh

EIKH ABDULLAH

Nobody Can pple Us"

FOR ALL his aura, the lion has ered deep winter. Age is visible in all its ility on Sheikh Abdullah's face. The eikh claims he is 76, but people who have into his past say he is actually 79 years That makes him the oldest politician in er in India. On June 8, the Sheikh's d pressure was still high enough to e his doctors concern, but he sat with CHAITANYA KALBAG *for an r-long interview. Excerpts:*

Q. You have said that the controver- Resettlement Bill had been moved in 0. Why has it come to boil now, just ore elections are due?

A. I was in prison for a long time. I n't around when the Jammu and shmir Constitution was passed. For 22 rs this state was under Congress rule. soon as I returned in 1975 we began to k into it. Some people who had come m Pakistan, were originally Kashmiri zens, and wanted to settle here again were sent back. When they filed writs the High Court they were thrown out. e court said there was no law to ovide for conferment of citizenship on m. We had no law to take them back. en, for two years after the private mber's bill was introduced, a select mmittee with representatives from all rties—the Janata, the Congress(I) and National Conference—studied the . Only after that was it passed un- mously. Why the fuss then?

Q. The basic doubt seems to be about power of a state government to confer zenship.

A. There are enough constitutional ovisions for this. In any case, even if ere were some legal flaws in the bill, y did the Governor not refer them to ? Why has he referred the bill to the attorney general? If there are legal flaws, and even if the bill becomes law, even then an appeal can be made to the Supreme Court.

Q. ***What was the reason for your Hazratbal speech?***

A. It was made after a lot of thought. There is a wind of communalism blowing through the country. The Muslim communalists were thrown out, into Pakistan, in 1947. That left the Hindu communalists. And they are posing a great danger.

"So long as I'm alive I'll fight Hindu communalism. If the National Conference dies with me, then somebody else might take over. Otherwise our commitment remains—we will not allow ourselves to be swamped."

Q. ***But isn't the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jamaat-i-Tulaba quite strong in the Kashmir Valley?***

A. That isn't true. In any case the elections are the true barometer of somebody's strength. And, as long as these organisations do not step outside the law, how can we ban them? The fact remains that Hindu communalists want to see that the Muslims in Kashmir are reduced to a minority. And this hysteria reflects Mrs Gandhi's style of functioning. She has openly said that only one party should rule both at the Centre and in the states.

Q. ***Do you apprehend that the Centre will try to topple your government?***

A. How can she topple my government? We have entrusted the security of our state to the Centre, to the army. If the Centre wants it can use the army, it can arrest us, it can kill people. Constitutionally nobody can topple us. But in 1953, with the help of the army, a legal government was toppled.

Q. ***Does your experience of the last 35 years induce any doubts about accession?***

A. I fought at that time against Muslim communalism. Now I am fighting against its Hindu counterpart. The RSS and the BJP are getting stronger and stronger. They don't recognise the existence of any other community except the Hindus—not Muslim, or Christians, or even Sikhs.

Q. ***Do you think Mrs Gandhi lacks good advisers on Kashmir?***

A. She has after all sidelined people like Syed Mir Qasim. The problem is that Mrs Gandhi is authoritarian. She will never realise this. When elections to two Rajya Sabha seats were held recently, I offered one to Mir Qasim with surplus National Conference votes. Mrs Gandhi refused. Ultimately the man elected was a BJP man, elected with Congress(I) help.

Q. ***At a sensitive point of time like the one we are passing through right now, is it wise to stir up communal ghosts?***

A. Everything is a signal of the disaster facing the country. Himachal Pradesh, where the BJP almost won power, is a signal. So is Kerala, where Mrs Gandhi had no compunction in allying with the Muslim League. I did not mean, in my Hazratbal speech, that the communalists are in power—that is, in power at the Centre. I meant that they are dangerously close to power. We have made enough sacrifices. Some more aren't difficult. We did not accede to a Hindu India, but to a secular India.

Q. ***What is likely to happen when you cease to be at the helm of affairs?***

A. Anything can happen, but so long as I'm alive I'll fight Hindu communalism. If the National Conference dies with me, then somebody else might take over. Otherwise our commitment remains—we will not allow ourselves to be swamped.

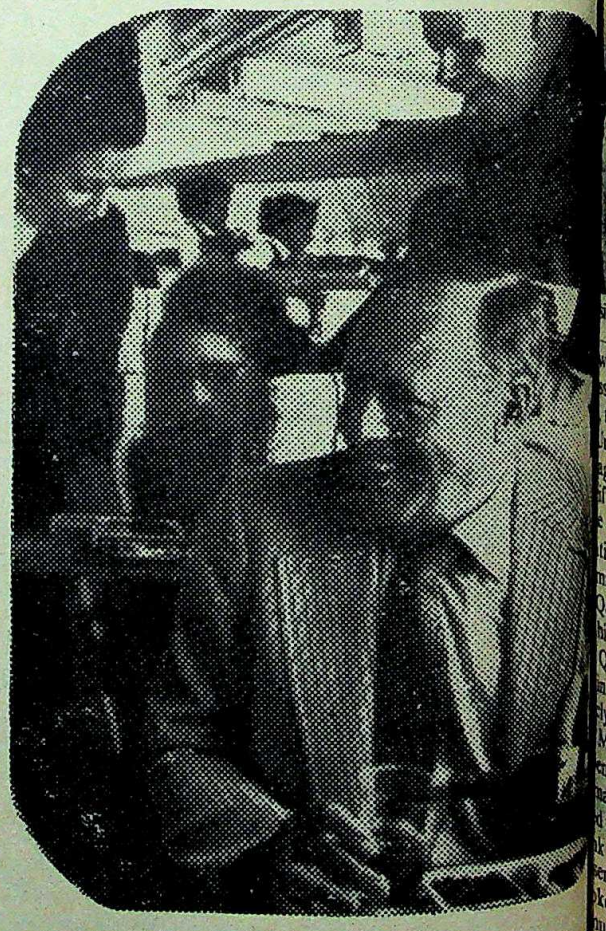
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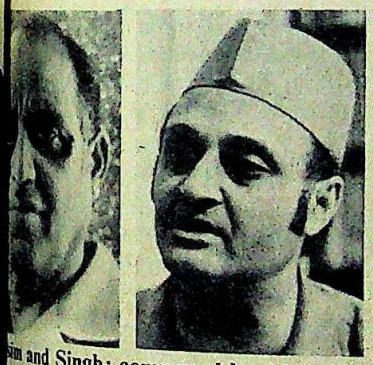
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eliberately inviting a strong reaction
he Centre. But his belligerence seemed
n also from an urgent need to evoke
upport for the ruling National Confer-
ainted by corruption and maladmin-
on, the Sheikh's Government has cer-
lost its 1977 lustre. Clearly, too, he is
ed by intimations of mortality, and the
ility of a power struggle between his
d heir-apparent Farooq and son-in-
M. Shah after his death.

sically, the Sheikh's current tirade
n support from his staunchest op-
S. Says Abdul Gani Lone, president
People's Conference: "The Sheikh is
e-asserting Kashmir's autonomy. Why
e such a furore? Are we a colony
to Delhi's whims and fancies?"

ounters Dr Karan Singh, now an
endent MP and leader of the Vishwa
Sammelan, an umbrella revivalist
which he admits, contains some com-
elements: "Basically, it is oversim-
g things to say the Sheikh's actions are
al gimmicks. Something more serious



im and Singh: communal backlash?

wing. If this kind of thing goes on, and
sive and proselytising Islam is advo-
there will be a backlash."

Unhealthy Situation: The Sheikh might
gree to reconsider the Bill, say obser-
f Mrs Gandhi were to talk to him or
a senior Congress(I) emissary. It is
tive of the situation in Jammu and
mir, therefore, that a leader like Syed
Qasim, who could have been Mrs
hi's standard-bearer, has been side-
Qasim who gave up the chief minister-
n 1975 in the Sheikh's favour has
ly fallen out with the state Congress(I)
Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. He says his
ndent views are not liked by the High
and. Says Qasim: "I have always
d for reconciliation, not confrontation.
k we should recognise the Sheikh as
enting a certain trend and not
ke him. I'll never call the Sheikh
unal."

The crunch might come when elections
nnounced. Qasim, who is accused of
too accommodating towards the
Sheikh, will then try to assert his sway over the party's rank and file. There are indications that a rebuff then would lead to his exit from the Congress(I). Sources say that Qasim is very upset because the prime minister refused him a Rajya Sabha ticket earlier this year, although the Sheikh had promised him National Conference surplus votes.

Qasim's strategy seems to be that the Congress(I) ought to patch up with the Sheikh for now, and gradually take over the show after his death. One thing stood out above the hubbub about the Sheikh's communal speech—that the chief minister had, at one stroke, appealed to the deepest sentiments of his people, and thrown the Opposition's *hapni-tapnis* (riff-raff) into confusion.

But communalism has acquired a forked tongue in Kashmir; BJP President A.B. Vajpayee's announcement of a campaign against the Resettlement Bill only reinforced apprehensions that the Congress(I) and the BJP would not be averse to joining hands in order to counter the Sheikh's weight. At the same time, in his anxiety to protect Kashmiri Muslim interests, the Sheikh might play into the hands of Muslim communalist bodies like the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jamaat-i-Tulaba. Tulaba president Tajamul Islam was arrested on April 14 for speaking publicly against accession to India and provoking riots in the wake of the killing of three Arabs in Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque by an Israeli gunman.

Jamaat cadres now number about 10,000, and the organisation reportedly wields enormous influence in the state's educational institutions. Two years back, a Jamaat-led agitation led to the banning of books by Milton, Wells and Toynbee, as well as the Book of Knowledge, from school and college libraries. Moreover, youth organisations like the Mahazi Azadi, a militant "liberation front", the People's League, and the Tulaba have been working up popular sentiment against an all-devouring Hindu India.

How Mrs Gandhi handles this situation remains to be seen. For the moment, the Centre has a host of other problems, and Home Ministry sources discern a disturbing similarity between communal arguments being propagated in both Kashmir and Punjab. Ultimately, the Sheikh has to be handled with kid gloves; everybody who knows him intimately agrees that he is a towering egoist. The tragedy is that he is similar in this and other traits to Mrs Gandhi. These similarities have widened the gulf between them in the last five years. But Kashmir does not deserve pettiness; it needs wisdom and statemanship.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG in Srinagar

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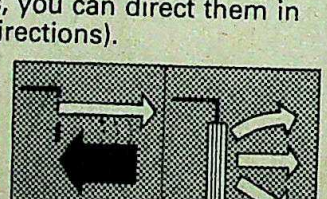
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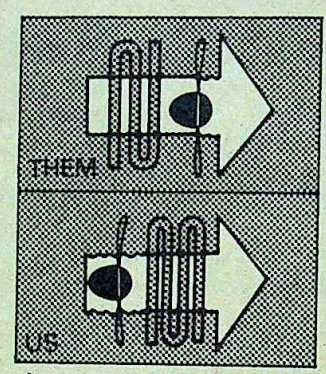


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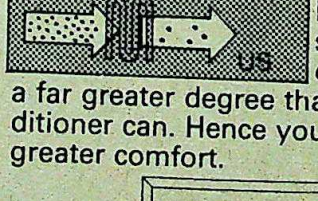
Secondly, other air conditioners have their 'return' air passages placed too close to their air supply grills. So there's a chance of 'short-cycling' — or the cool air being sucked right back in, without circulating around the room. But we have carefully separated the return air passage from the air supply grill to avoid this danger, and ensure better cooling.



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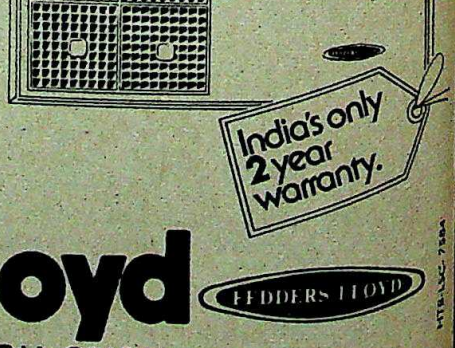
Third: whereas other air conditioners first cool the air and then propel it into the room via the fan (thus allowing it to lose some of its coolness), we've designed the Fedders Lloyd so that the air is blown into the room directly through the cooling coils. Hence, naturally, it's cooler and fresher. (And, what's more, this way the coils significantly filter the sound of the blower).

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AT

liction And Fireworks

THE APPOINTMENT of Dr Mahipat Mehta, MP, as the president of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee(I) (GPCC-I) last month has come as a major setback for the Chief Minister, inh Solanki. Mehta happens to be Solanki's severest critics. The Cong- High Command's decision has once injected a fresh dose of adrenalin the dissidents who had been lying er since Mrs Gandhi came down on dissident leaders like Maganbhai and Yogendra Makwana last Cabinet reshuffle.

hough Mehta's appoint- which came in the wake death of the GPCC(I) presi- Maldevji Odedra was ini- stopgap arrangement, it rs as if he will stay for time to come. Solanki air- to Delhi twice to try to the appointment with- but he seemed unable to y ice, much to the joy of issidents. Solanki now himself in a dilemma with arty organisational set-up e Government at logger- Though it has been a since Mehta took over, as not met with Solanki formally to ss party affairs. At the party office, ents have the upper hand and for the ime since Solanki took over, the daily briefing is done by Vadilal Kamdar, a hard-boiled dissident leader and supporter of Mehta. The briefings till recently taken by Hasmukh Patel, al secretary of the GPCC(I) and active orter of Solanki.

Deadlock: Solanki had told newsmen arious occasions that Mehta would be ved soon. But that has not happened. High Command has reportedly assured a that he would be removed only if was some other post that he would ble to fill. Last fortnight, Solanki flew to Delhi with Agriculture ister, Mahant Vijaydasji, a soft liner, to convince the High Command that Vijaydasji—should be installed as pre- nt. He again drew a blank.

After Odedra passed away the general etary of the AICC, Rajendra Kumari pai, sent a telegram to the Congress office owering Mehta to take over party affairs another president is appointed. But the telegram did not reach Mehta. Solanki frantically tried to get the decision changed to no avail. Mehta came to know of his appointment only three days later when he went to Delhi to meet Bajpai. Says a rotund and chubby-faced Mehta: "Solanki cannot stop me from functioning. I don't take orders from him. I am determined to go all over the state and re-organise the party at the grass roots level." The Solanki camp is obviously perturbed over the number of public meetings that Mehta and other dissidents will address in the coming weeks. The meetings organised by the GPCC(I) will be held at Rajkot, Surat, Baroda, Palanpur and Anand. Solanki and his men have been kept out of the meetings. It appears as if the cold war is on.



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Solanki (left) and Mehta: heated exchanges

Influence: Riding on a wave of popularity, the Congress(I) had bagged 25 out of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in the 1980 elections. Subsequently it bagged 140 out of the 181 Assembly seats. Ever since, the party has been losing its influence both in the urban and rural pockets. This is clearly indicated in the results of all the six by-elections that were held in the last two years. Though the Congress won four of these elections, they fared much worse than in the last elections with a disjointed opposition jointly bagging more votes than the victorious Congress(I) candidates. Ironically, Solanki has to take the major share of the blame for the waning popularity of the party and cannot attribute it to Indira Gandhi's national image which has also taken a downward plunge.

Soon after taking over the party presidentship, Mehta set up a fact-finding committee to probe into the causes of the frequent communal disturbances at Baroda and suggest solutions. Interestingly, the committee consisted of well-known dissidents like Ibrahim Kalania, MP, Rafiuddin Sheikh, Ahmedabad's mayor, Ranjitsinh Gaikwad, MP and Manubhai Parmar, MP. The lone representative from the Solanki camp was Hasmukh Patel, GPCC(I) general secretary. However, he opted out of the committee saying that "the committee would only rekindle communal tension in Baroda".

The committee started its enquiry on May 6 at Baroda. Only a few hours after it had begun recording statements, a crowd of about 100 people, some of them bleeding, came over to the Baroda Circuit House where the committee was sitting and alleged that the police had beaten them up to prevent them from testifying before the committee.

Baseless: However, the Baroda police maintain that the allegations are baseless. According to them, a well-known trouble maker Mohammed Hussein Dudhwala, was arrested on May 6. A crowd of about 200, mostly women and children, came to the police station where he was detained and demanded his release. The police resorted to a lathi charge to disperse the crowd when they indulged in stoning. The injured then went to the Circuit House and alleged that they were beaten up as they were going to depose before the committee. Said Baroda Police Commissioner, R. Sibbal: "The police had not stopped a single person from deposing before the committee. A political colour is being given to the rioting incident by vested interests."

Vadilal Kamdar who is also a GPCC(I) secretary maintains that the communal tension was whipped up by the police as soon as the committee started work so as to hamper its investigations. Special police reinforcements were posted at Yakutpura and neighbouring Muslim localities on May 6. Sibbal explains these steps by saying that this was done as police parties were searching some of the houses since they had information that two suspects who were involved in a case of attempted murder were being shielded by people in those localities. The police drew a blank. The reinforcements were posted in order to ensure that police parties could conduct the search, says Sibbal. The Baroda incident helped dissidents make their point that the Government was throwing a spanner in their works. Whatever the truth of this particular incident, Gujarat can easily look forward to more fireworks within the Congress(I) hierarchy for the rest of this year.

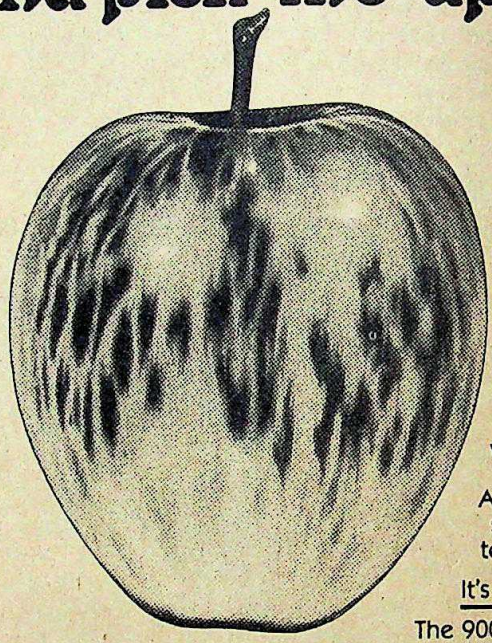
—RAMESH MENON in Ahmedabad

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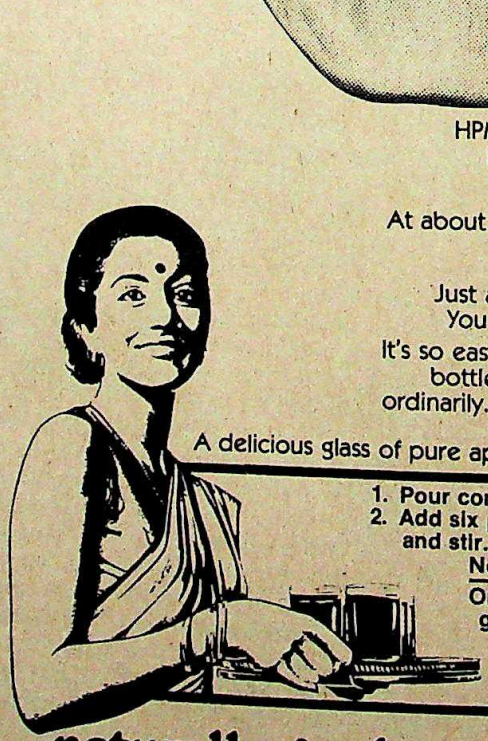
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akhia Breaks Out

IT TOOK Sukur Naran Bakhia a mere two months to outwit the police yet again. And he did it in a way that was calculated to make them look as silly as possible. Even as officers ujarat police stood waiting at the of Goa's Fort Aguada Jail, with ts for his re-arrest, Bakhia, king of lers, left by a side gate and walked from the jail to freedom.

The escape showed that Bakhia had lost f his old skills. He has already escaped ustody before. This time also it was s that he had distributed largesse y and ensured that all eyes would be d when he made his bid for freedom. wo weeks of painstaking investigations only brought out the sketchiest details Bakhia's escape. The police are now or less certain that Bakhia and another SA (Conservation of Foreign Exge and Prevention of Smuggling ities) detenu were escorted to the inner f the jail. From here watched by the s in cell 16 of the jail, they left by the ate of the inner wall and then used a r to climb the outer wall. The prisoners witnessed the escape claim that they o raise an alarm but the sound of their ng was drowned by the sound of the s which break against the jail walls.

Planned Escape: Once they were out-Bakhia and his associate had to make a phill trek, no easy matter for a man in ia's state of health, to a point where a was waiting for them. The taxi took to a point about two km away where a Ambassador with Tamil Nadu numlates was ready to whisk them away to gute Beach. From here the four men in ar split up and Bakhia travelled in a canoe to Behim, a tiny village by the where he spent the night.

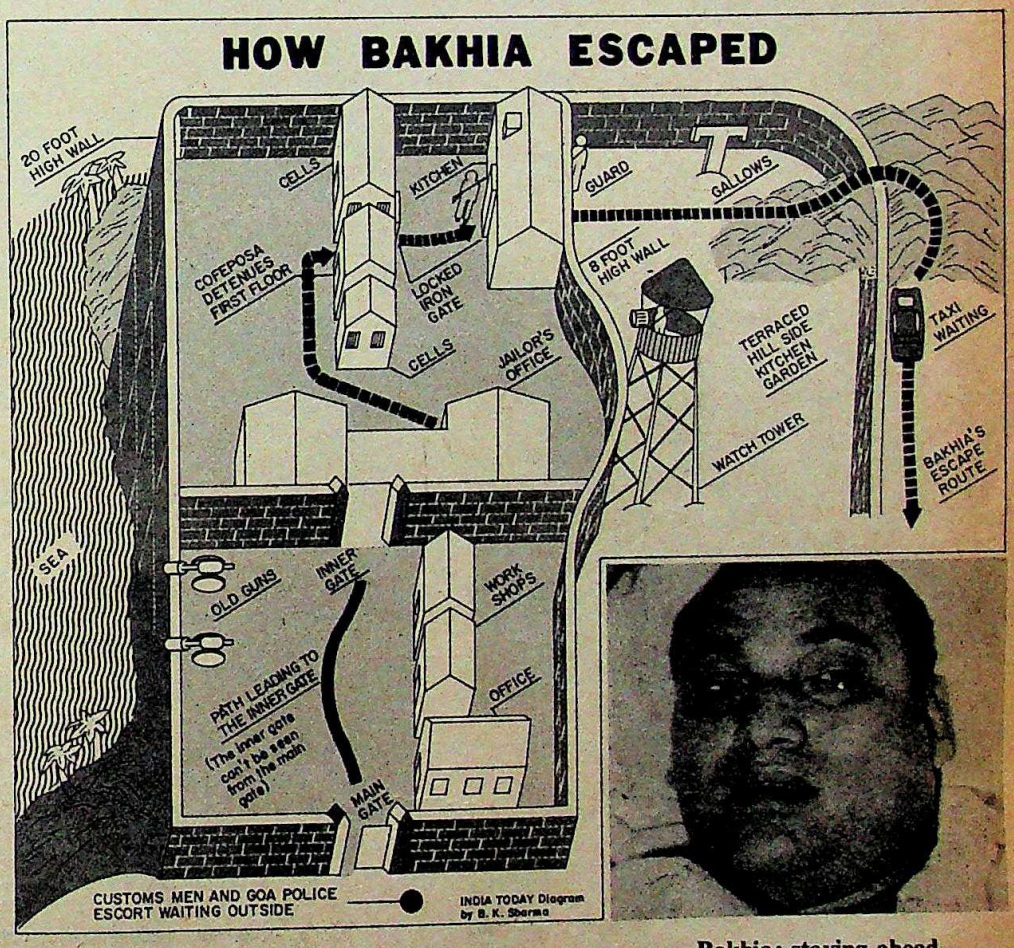
The trail ends here but not the story. ia left a storm behind him and heads are in to roll. Within three days of Bakhia's e the police had raided the house of the rintendent of Fort Aguada Jail, S.U. at, where they picked up gold orna- worth more than Rs 40,000 and details her ornaments worth Rs 2 lakh in safe sits. They also obtained details of fixed sits totalling Rs 99,000 in bank vaults. at has since been arrested but he is sticking stubbornly to the story that money and the jewellery represented his gs over the years. He also insists that he d as per the letter of the law.

But Kamat's part in the whole escape is murky to say the least. Kamat, who once worked in the Regional Transport Office, in Daman, Bakhia's stronghold, played a major role in the delaying game which upset the well-laid plans of customs officials.

When Bakhia was arrested under COFEPOSA two months ago, it was anticipated that there might be difficulty holding onto him. Accordingly it was arranged that the states where Bakhia concentrated his activities would coordinate their actions against him. The April detention order was issued by the Goa Government. As feared when the detention order came up before the Advisory Board, Justice S.K. Desai of the Bombay High Court held that there were no sufficient grounds to justify Bakhia's detention. But as enforcement authorities were determined that Bakhia would not escape their clutches so easily it had already been arranged that the Gujarat Government would issue a warrant for his arrest under COFEPOSA.

Delaying Tactics: But when the Gujarat police turned up with the arrest warrant on Saturday, May 29 they found that they had to wait until the formal release order came from the Goa Government. By the time this came it was late in the evening and it was past 9 p.m. that Satwant Singh, the police inspector from Ahmedabad, was ushered in to meet Kamat. When Bakhia was summoned before them he claimed that he could not read the order because of the bad light.

The next day the posse returned at dawn and insisted that they be allowed to implement the order inside the jail. At this point Kamat laid down his own ground rules. Bakhia could not be arrested inside the jail, he insisted. As B.M. Kolakkar, assistant public prosecutor states in his report to B.V. Kumar, collector of customs, Ahmedabad:



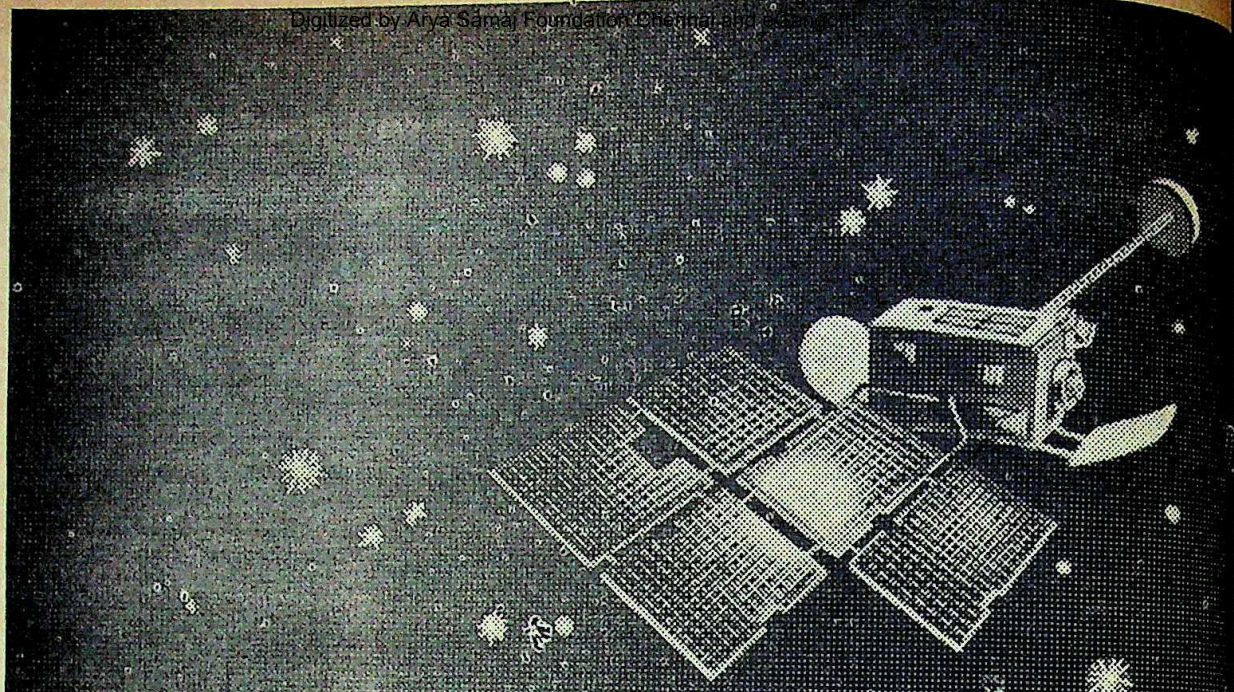
Bakhia: staying ahead

"He (Kamat) flatly refused demanding a transfer warrant if the warrant was executed inside the jail."

Thwarted, the police party withdrew to outside the main gate. Two hours later at 9.40 a.m. Kamat informed them that Bakhia would be released along with a few other COFEPOSA detenues. The first hint of serious trouble came when Bakhia was not among the first group of detenues. Finally when the agitated policemen made enquiries, the hesitant voice of Assistant Gaoler B. Fernandes came over the intercom informing them that Bakhia had been released

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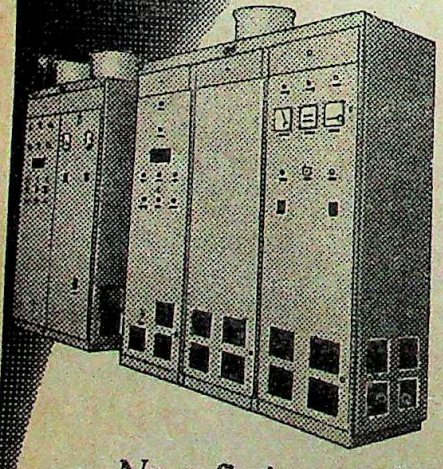
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...d already left.

Dragnet: The escape set the wheels ...g in a number of government depart... In Goa, police Superintendent ... Deol was set on the job of finding out ...whereabouts of Fort Aguada's most ...ious inmate. In New Delhi and ...ay Department of Revenue Intelli... (DRI) men spread a dragnet for their ...s did Collector of Customs, Kumar in ...dabad.

The first and only major breakthrough ...ven a 'lifer' in Aguada Jail decided to ...ew days later the Goa police ma... to lay their hands on Prakash Kerkar, ...driver. The police suspect that Kerkar ...perates a taxi from Fort Aguada Hotel ...he man who drove Bakhia and three ...men to the point where the second car ...ed them. Deol has also decided that the ...way to handle the case is to cast a wide ...nd identify a number of suspects. ...in the jail itself he has identified 12 men ...are being constantly shadowed. He is ...of the view that since many people in the ...must have colluded it may be worthwhile ...tain some even if the grounds are flimsy, ...e hope that one of them will squeal.

Deol may, however, have his work cut ...or him. On June 8 police recovered the ...of Sadanand Apa Parab Salcar, the gaoler on duty when Bakhia escaped. Salcar vanished soon after he was interrogated. His body was found in the sea and it was not immediately clear whether the death was a case of murder or suicide.

Over the last two decades Bakhia has built up a smuggling empire that was responsible for dumping huge amounts of gold onto the bullion markets of Ahmedabad and Bombay (see INDIA TODAY, May 15). He is even reputed to have been the single biggest buyer of contraband gold in Dubai.

Bakhia clawed his way to this position by a combination of cunning and ambition. Like many other residents of Daman he got involved in the smuggling racket at the lowest level—as a carrier. But he rose quickly through the ranks striking alliances whenever the need arose. Intelligence sources are certain that Bakhia will have to surface sooner or later. They say that there is nothing to indicate that Bakhia has left the country. They believe that he is underground somewhere in Saurashtra. They also claim that if he is to keep effective control over his empire he will have to stay in the country. They have searched 19 of his known haunts and are keeping careful watch over the Jalarama temple in Gujarat. This is one visit, they say, which is a must for Bakhia.

Restiveness: To back up their point that Bakhia cannot afford to try and operate his empire by remote control DRI officers say that even before Bakhia escaped he had been showing signs of restiveness. In April, he is said to have sent his brother-in-law, Haribhai Tandal, a one-time MLA from Goa to negotiate his release. Tandal, however, was arrested in Delhi, and crucial DRI documents were found in his possession indicating that Bakhia had transacted business worth Rs 30 crore in bullion in the last three months. They add that especially after Tandal's capture, Bakhia had to take a calculated risk and get out of jail. Says an enforcement official: "He had ample time to plan his escape. One day before it, his nephew, Hasmukh Bhai, who was detained with him was released. We think he was only awaiting the word and would have got away even if his release had not been ordered. The decision of the Advisory Board got to him even before it got to us."

But whatever the consequences may be it seems certain that Bakhia will have to surface at some time. And when he does, a lot of people will be waiting for him. Till then, however, all the police have is a taxi-driver and a gaoler and they certainly don't have Sukur Naran Bakhia's forwarding address.

—ASOKA RAINA in Panjim

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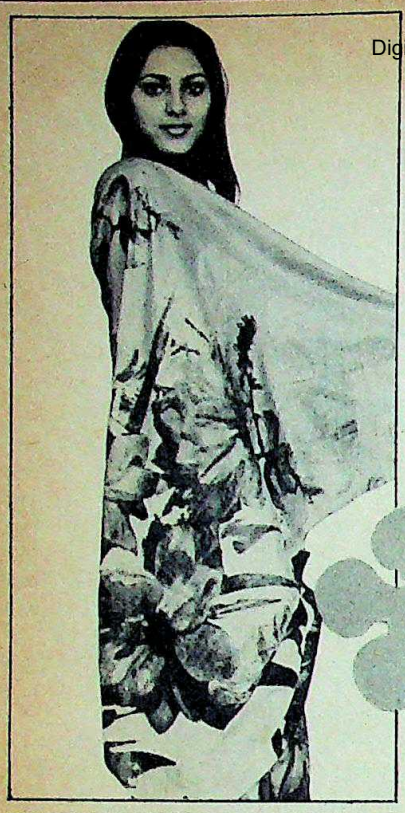


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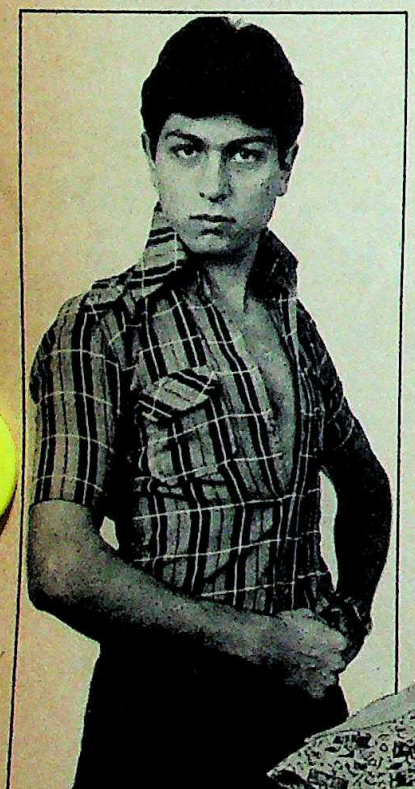
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AB

Government That Moves

LAST fortnight when K.D. Vasudeva became the new chief secretary of Punjab in place of Ishwar Chander Puri, the Government claimed it was putting an end to wayward administration ng down to business. Pursuing the ne of action it replaced inspector- of police Birbal Nath by J.S. Bawa, rmer director of the Central Bureau vestigation who had initially been ant to return to his home state.

But these changes came only after the minister told Chief Minister Darbara three months ago to set right his nistration. The same advice was ten- by Rajiv Gandhi but the chief minister ontinued to dilly-dally. As Darbara told INDIA TODAY: "I maintained that was an intelligent officer but the prime ter's wish was supreme and hence the e." In private, however, Darbara is credited with the view that Puri was ching files and causing delay in the entation of some vital decisions.

ckness: The fact was, as one senior ary known for his hard work said, "We o wait for weeks to have a meeting with hief secretary and urgent government ess suffered." He, like most others, was that the Government was at long last g. Puri's inability to handle the state rnment apparatus had come to such a that even the chief minister's Principal tary, Tejinder Khanna, was disil- ed. Khanna, a close relation of Puri, d a key role in getting him the coveted on and their close relationship had the Government the nickname nna-Puri Sarkar'.

Earlier, the Union Cabinet Secretary naswamy Rao Saheb had dashed to to be told by the state Governor Dr Chenna Reddy who was holidaying that the administration needed to be up to meet the worsening communal on. Rao Saheb, according to informed s, had also sought the governor's help ain the active cooperation of oppo- parties, particularly of the Akalis who een avoiding participation in a state- peace committee.

Dr Reddy is believed to have asked for a shake-up of the administration, right the district level, to restore confidence ekindle hope among the people. He had during his tours that Hindus by and felt insecure and Sikhs were getting ated. Dr Reddy had given a detailed account in his reports to the President on the administration's dithering.

Extremism: Verily, Punjab towns have passed through a nightmarish period. Punjabis have by and large rebuffed persistent efforts by a handful of extremists to disturb communal harmony. But from September 9 last year, when the veteran journalist Lala Jagat Narain was murdered, to May 22 this year when four peaceful citizens at Patti were gunned down by a killer gang, the situation has been deteriorating day by day.

No one is prepared to buy the Punjab chief minister's claim of June 7 that half the gang has been arrested and the extremists would be finished soon. Two days earlier at Jullundur he had blamed a certain Punjabi Congress(I) leader in Delhi for aiding extremists and trying to destabilise his Government. Darbara Singh had made more than clear that Union Home Minister Zail Singh was the brain behind it all. "People within my own party who look at me with a sour eye are showing sympathy with these elements. They are floating rumours like imminent President's rule in the state. They wanted to get rid of me at whatever cost. I shall continue till I enjoy the blessings of my leader, Indira Gandhi," he said.



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

(Clockwise from top left) Vasudeva, Puri, Bawa and Birbal Nath: top-level changes

Darbara Singh had continued to blame the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) and the Akalis for providing refuge to the extremist killers in the gurudwaras. The SGPC President, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, has refuted the Government's charge and challenged the chief minister to send his plainclothesmen to see if the gurudwaras were a sanctuary for the criminals. If his charge was found incorrect, he should quit. Darbara Singh has not replied to the challenge.

Why are these culprits not being arrested? Different political leaders give different reasons. State Pradesh Congress(I) President Hans Raj Sharma blames a big section in the police and civil administration which is sympathetic to extremists. He wants the Government to take appropriate steps to deal with the extremists and to thoroughly screen men in government service. Said he: "No one is bothering about the innocent peace-loving citizens being shot dead near the police stations." CPI General Secretary C. Rajeswara Rao shares this analysis but goes a step further. He finds the Congress(I) infighting at the root of current communal tension in Punjab. The Akalis and the CPI-M are also credited with this view.

Allegations: The Bharatiya Janata Party, which has urged for President's rule in the state, minced no words in blaming Mrs Gandhi for the communal mess. Maneka Gandhi at her Jullundur public meeting on May 29 blamed the present-day rulers for communal violence in Punjab. "These people in power are aware of Punjab's wrath and strength, and in order to save themselves they are trying to desecrate temples and gurudwaras, sow the seeds of division among Hindus and Sikhs and rule by the policy of division," she said.

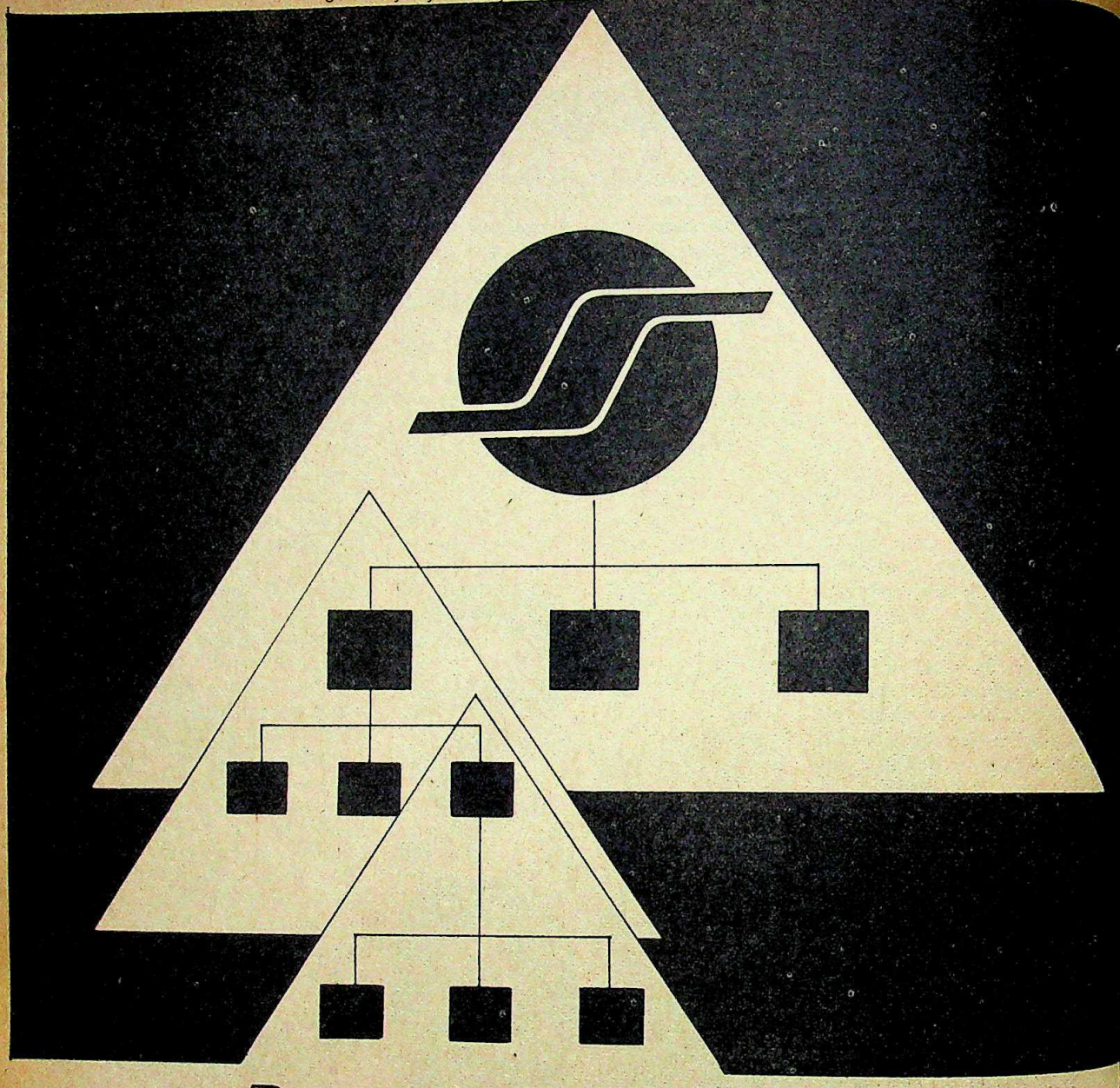
There certainly seems to be no end to the spoils system which Darbara Singh has willy-nilly introduced by distributing largesse to his favourites in the matter of appointments to state bodies. While other group leaders are sore, the chief minister denies having favoured his own men. "There are Hindus, Sikhs, Harijans and representatives of the backward castes among the chairmen," he told INDIA TODAY. It is no secret, however, that these positions provide Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000 per month to the favoured in the shape of salary, car and residence—besides political leverage.

The changes in the higher echelons of the bureaucracy and the proposed screening exercise could prove a mere cosmetic face-lift if the leadership continues to be bogged down by a lack of political will and fails to rise above the evil of groupism. The experience of the past two years, unfortunately, offers no hope.

—GOBIND THUKRAL

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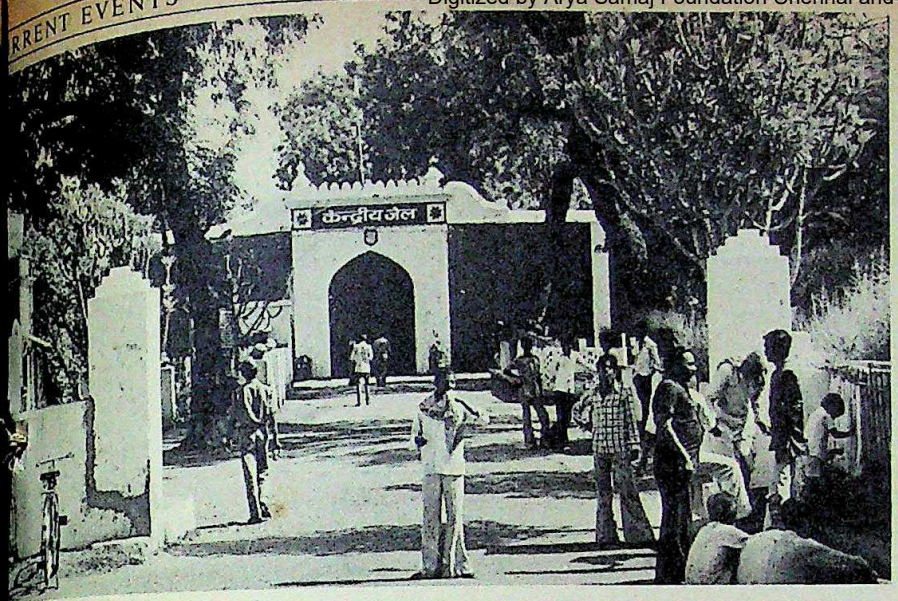
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DHYA PRADESH

riminally Confined

IN GWALIOR Central Jail, there are 34 prisoners who have committed no crime, who are not wanted by the police, who have no court case pending against them, who have hurt no one. They men and women who have been flung jail merely because they are mentally ill. The law, governed by the Indian acy Act of 1912, divides lunatics into e categories. The first are those who have ed lunatic while serving their sentence in ; the second comprise those who have lost r mental balance during the course of r trial. But it is the non-criminal lunatic l), the third category, who is the most nged.

Under the law, the police can arrest a son believed to be of unsound mind if he ound to be at large with no one to care for , or if he is considered dangerous. In er case the alleged lunatic is produced ore a magistrate who can have him sent to ental hospital if he thinks he is mentally In fact the NCL is admitted for hospitali- on, not because he has committed a me.

Silent Sufferers: But the men who should n hospital have been flung into jail for no lt of theirs. A majority of them are violent y once in a very long while and for the t time suffer silently. They are in no dition to fight for their rights because y cannot understand them. "And eve- ne else wants to forget about them any- y," says a Gwalior jail official, "including ir families. So who will take up their case?" If the shortcoming can be laid at any or, it is that of an uncaring state government's. In a state whose population is close to 5.25 crore, there are just 290 beds for mental patients. A hospital outside Indore has a 108-bed capacity and the one at Gwalior has place for 182 patients. In the last 16 years the state's population has swelled by 40 per cent but not a single bed has been added in a mental hospital during this period. Moreover, the entire state has less than half a dozen qualified psychiatrists.

"We do all we can," says Dr Swarna Kanta Malhotra, a harassed-looking middle-aged woman, who is superintendent of the mental hospital at Gwalior, her office packed with patients and their relatives clamouring for admission or attention. The hospital normally has about 230 cases, about 30 per cent more than its actual capacity.

According to the correct legal procedure, if a person turns lunatic either during his sentence or trial in any jail in the state, he is transferred to the Gwalior Central Jail for better medical attention. Currently in Gwalior there are 12 lunatics whose trial has been for the time being suspended, while another 36 have turned lunatic while undergoing their sentence. Nearly all of those convicted are serving life imprisonment. The jail also has 34 NCL's, several of whom have waited for years to be admitted to the hospital nearby. Some cases:

► Ramashankar (Prisoner no. 190) was sent from the district jail in Tikamgarh for transfer to the mental hospital in Gwalior. Short, dark and thin, 28-year-old Ramashankar has been in the Gwalior jail since June 24, 1973. He obeys instructions but is unable to think for himself. He has shown no sign of violence in the last four years and is not required to be subjected to shock treatment.

► Birendra Khare (Prisoner no. 224), aged 24, was transferred from the Central Jail in Rewa where he was held pending certification as a lunatic. He has been in Gwalior jail since December 16, 1973. Though he succumbs to epileptic fits occasionally and turns violent three or four times a year, he does not need shock treatment. Khare has had no visitors for several years.

► Suresh Chand (Prisoner no. 226) who is 40 years old, has an average build and is balding, sits quietly in the jail courtyard. Chand has improved considerably since New Year's day in 1974 when he arrived from Jabalpur. Then, he could not even bathe himself but is now able to look after his basic needs himself but cannot talk coherently.

► Kammoda (Prisoner no. 227), aged 38, has also been in Gwalior jail since January 1, 1974 when he was transferred from Sagar. He looks broken as he pleads his case: "I want to go back to my family. I am willing to do any kind of work if I am released." Kammoda talks perfectly well, has no violent tendencies and says that he is a widower with a son who would now be 20 years old. He has not seen him in eight years.

The ward for lunatics is in the very heart of the huge 1,000-bed jail. The space available does not permit for the segregation of lunatics into criminal and non-criminal, violent and non-violent. There is a long and narrow hall, some 50 yards in length, with raised blocks of cement which serve as beds. All the male lunatics are housed here irrespective of whether they are convicts, undertrials or NCL's.

Wrongful Confinement: Keeping NCL's here amounts to wrongful confinement since in each case the magistrate's orders specifically ask for their transfer to the mental hospital. They are only routed through the Gwalior jail pending their removal to the hospital.

What seems incredible is that even after spending several years in jail it has been impossible to find a bed for the NCL's in hospital. Jailor Prem Shrivastava, 52, argues: "In the last three years or so, the hospital has not accepted a single case. If a bed is available they should inform us." Retorts a hospital spokesman: "If we have not accepted any NCL's it is because the jail has never bothered to transfer any of them. They just keep them."

The jail has three doctors, but none of them is a psychiatrist. Medical attention comes from a psychiatrist from the mental hospital who makes bi-weekly rounds. Admits a jail official: "Sustained medical attention is simply not possible. Also, in a

The Gwalior Central Jail: aggravating mental sickness

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hospital, a psychiatrist is constantly in touch with patients and is quick to certify that they have recovered and ready for release. When they are in jail, NCL's do not receive the certificate so easily." Kammoda's is a case in point. And for the last six months, after the transfer of one of the only two psychiatrists from the Gwalior mental hospital, the lunatics have had hardly any medical attention.

Medical Care: The Gwalior jail is said to be a convenient place because NCL's requiring attention can be taken to hospital. But even that is not easily possible, especially when the patients most urgently require medical care. Under the law, inmates can be sent to hospital, a bare 200 yards away, only under a police escort which, often, is simply not available. In the first five months of this year, for example, a police escort was asked for on 40 occasions but came only 14 times. In April, however, not a single lunatic could be treated as the escort never arrived.

Similarly, there are some 40 NCL's in the Gwalior hospital who have been sent directly from the districts. According to a hospital source, more than a third of the NCL's are normally confined even after they have been certified as recovered. And this is again because the law requires that the NCL can be sent back to the place from where he originally came, only under police escort.

Raj Bahadur was picked up
Shahdol police and admitted to the
hospital on November 29, 1981.
granted the certificate of reco
February 11 this year but till the end
was confined to hospital because
escort was not forthcoming.
Kumar, another patient, got his ce
on March 30 but two months later,
confined to hospital for the same re

Lunatics as a class, even wh
dangerous, have been primarily tre
embarrassing freaks, to be put away
sight at the first convenience. And wh
be a more convenient place than a j

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR in

SMUGGLING

Golden Haul

CLOSE on the heels of a sensational contraband haul worth Rs 1.40 crore in mid-April the Gujarat customs once again struck gold on May 24. In the biggest-ever haul in Gujarat they intercepted a harmless looking fishing craft and stumbled on gold biscuits worth Rs 1.70 crore. In the last five months, seizure of contraband by the Gujarat customs has totalled Rs 5.02 crore, an all-time high compared to Rs 1.50 crore and Rs 3.05 crore in 1980 and 1981 respectively.

Acting on a tip-off that a boat, *Laxmiprasad*, was arriving from Dubai carrying gold, customs officers from Bulsar and Ahmedabad disguised as fishermen kept a round-the-clock vigil on the sea off the Daman coast on May 21. After 60 hours of being tossed around on the rough seas, they spotted the country-craft. Masquerading as a fishing boat in trouble, they stopped the unsuspecting smugglers and jumped aboard but a thorough search revealed no trace of contraband.

Putrefying fish aboard the boat which was ostensibly out on a fishing expedition, however, were a dead give-away. Increasingly suspicious, Inspectors S.U. Saiyed and Nema Patel steered the craft to Bulsar and broke open its insides. Gold biscuits weighing 8,410 tolas spilled out. Six months ago, Saiyed had chased the same boat off the coast of Daman. The crew of the boat seeing the customs catch up with them in a hot chase, had jettisoned all the silver bars into the sea before a helpless Saiyed seized their boat. But this time, Saiyed disguised in a vest and a *lungi*, had the last laugh.

Intriguing Find: The recent haul is significant as documents seized along with the biscuits indicate that a crore of rupees in currency notes along with US $30,000 was carried from India by the crew to purchase gold. This is an extremely interesting development for intelligence agencies since the rupee is a non-convertible currency.

Detailed documents showing quantities of gold to be distributed to various parties in India were also seized. The most familiar name in the list was of Makhi Bawamiya whose name repeatedly figures in documents in recent seizures of gold coming from Dubai. Balance sheets showing remittances from India and how they were utilised to buy gold in Dubai were also recovered.

The Customs Collector B.V. Kumar told INDIA TODAY that with the recent seizures of gold in Gujarat, a clear pattern involving a top international smuggling syndicate operating from Dubai was emerging. Intelligence officials feel that two top smugglers wanted since 1974 under the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Act (COFEPOSA), Syed Ahmed Bawamiya and Syed Murtaza Bawamiya, are now based in Dubai and are dispatching gold to India. Makhi Bawamiya who operates from Bombay, is their brother.

A study of the balance sheets indicated that a smuggler made a net profit of at least 40 per cent on his investment. Three small time smugglers of Daman had thus become big operators by pumping profits into successive trips. Says a customs officer: "For these smugglers losing Rs 1.70 crore is not much of a loss. They have already made a fortune to see them through."

—RAMESH MENON



The captured crew of the *Laxmiprasad*: sensational seizure

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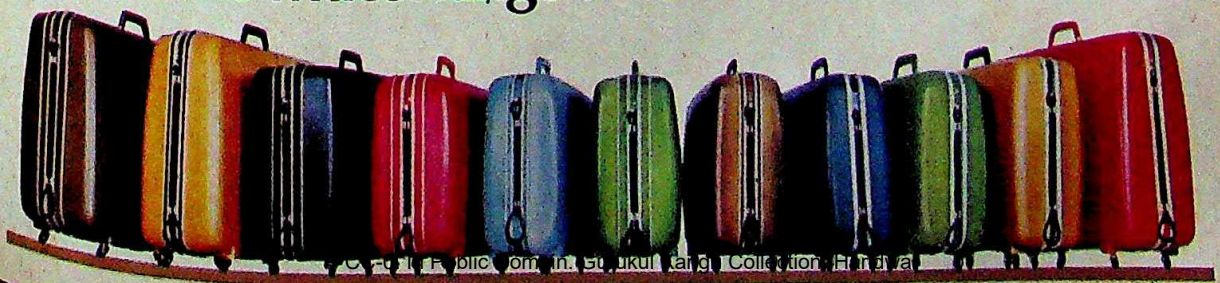
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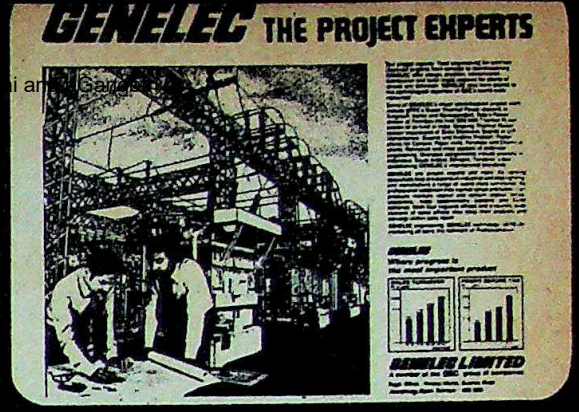
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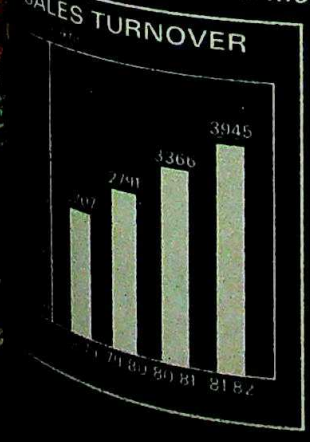
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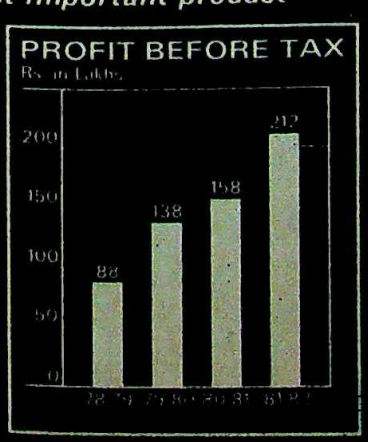
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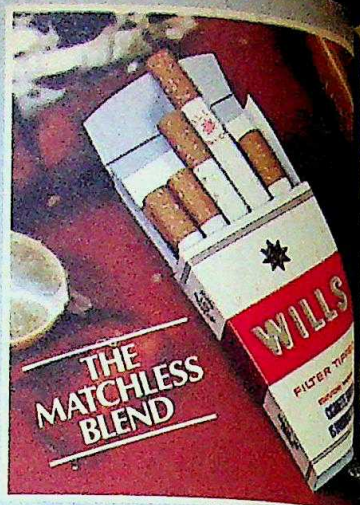
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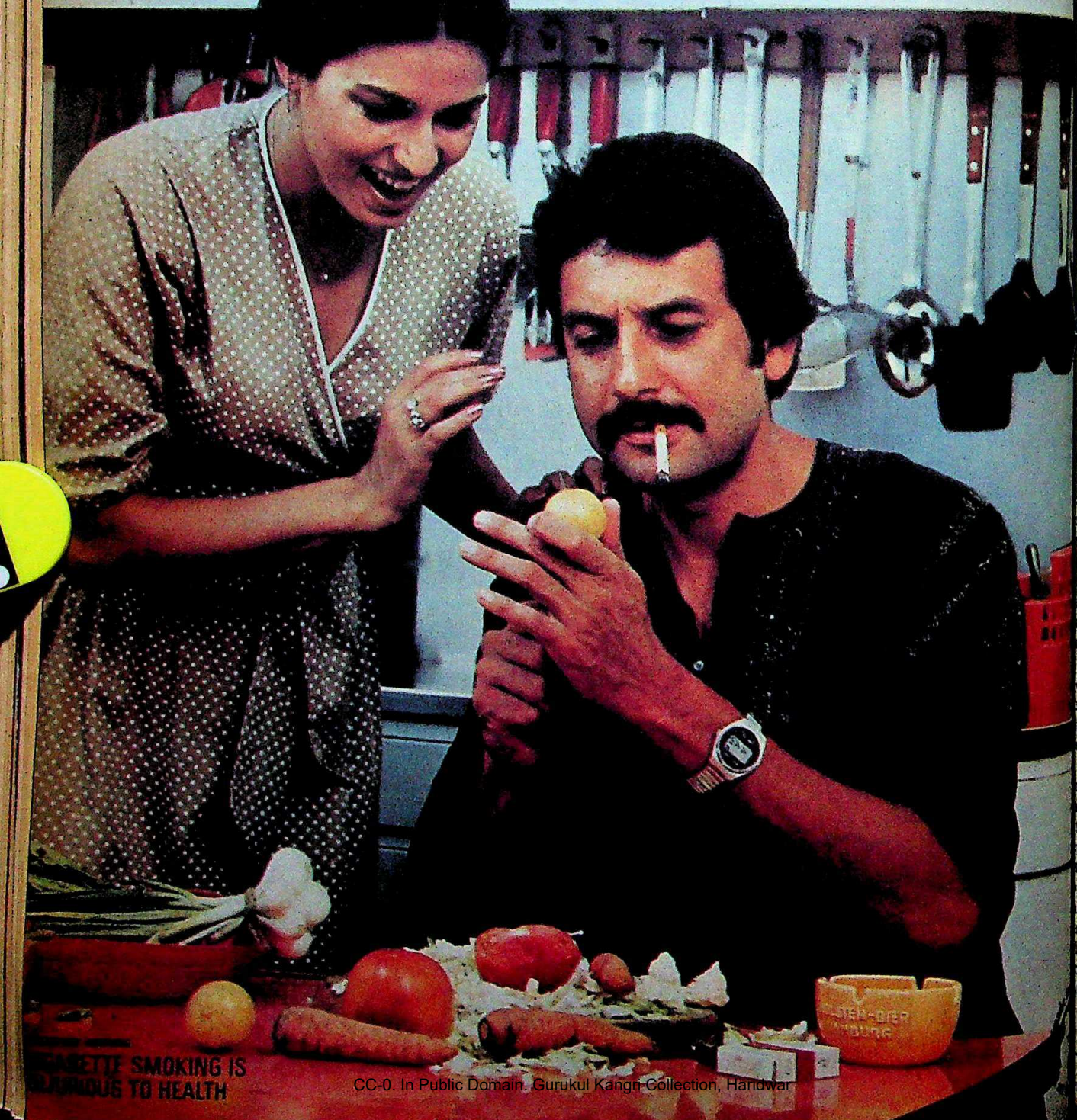
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ORAM

aldenga's Legacy

IT WAS a typical Mizo ambush: over in minutes with a minimum of bullets and no unnecessary killing. At the end of it, 'lieutenant' Vanlalfima was a free man again and the Central Reserve Force (CRPF) patrol returned home ing their fallen commander I.S. Dagar. incident took place at Khawruhlian, 90 north-east of Aizawl on the road to bal on May 23.

Dagar, the young deputy commandant, ironically gone on his last combing ration in Mizoram and had even packed bags to leave for Calcutta on his new ing later in the week. He was jubilant at ing bagged Vanlalfima, a Mizo National nt (MNF) "officer". It proved, however, to his last mission. It was also the vernment forces' first casualty in their ved operations against MNF rebels. And erved to underline the fact that, Laldenga no Laldenga, insurgency in Mizoram is from over.

It also belied the defence authorities' that the entire armed wing of the MNF been pushed back to their hide-outs in rma and Bangladesh immediately after crackdown began. Khawruhlian is nowere near the border and falls in the area der the army's control. The ill-fated CRPF rol was from a battalion under the 57 ountain Division's command. Prior to , all that the security agencies admitted the presence of a 15-strong hit squad in awl, presumably plotting to kill or kid- senior governnt functionaries in- ding the chief ister and lieute- t-governor.

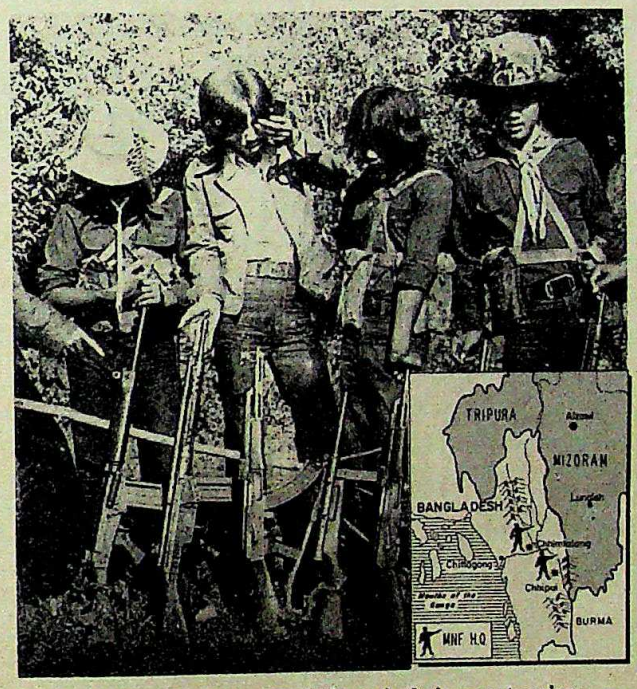


Laldenga

Elusive Rebels: ere can be many re- ns as to what ped the guerillas el- the army dragnet the third week of uary after Mrs ndhi finally lost ience in dealing with Laldenga. There re considerable gaps in the intelligence work. The rebels also had some premoni- n of what was coming. But, basically, it s their own initiative and instinct that de them disappear just as the army pat- s stirred out of their stockaded positions. ly the riff-raff was captured and that too thout weapons.

But the army has an explanation for this failure. Said a senior formation commander: "When a guerilla is on the run he has a headstart over you. What can you do if by the time you start closing in on him you are told the race is over and he has won? It's frustrating." The reference is to the series of well-guarded and fortified sanctuaries the MNF has in Burma and Bangladesh.

Burma, however, is no longer as safe as it used to be due to the existence of some sort of a *quid pro quo* between the Indian and Burmese forces. The Bangladesh army, on the other hand, prefers to have a similar relationship with the Mizo rebels. All that the Arakans and other Chin territories in Burma now have are elements of the depleted dagger brigade of the MNF. The rest are safe in Bangladesh.



MNF guerillas and (in set) their sanctuaries

The army has often drawn the Government's attention to the situation. There is no dearth of evidence to prove the Bangladesh Government's complicity with the MNF which they use for the twin purpose of neutralising the Chakma rebels' Shanti Bahini and also holding some sort of bargaining counter against India which, it suspects, is aiding the Chakmas.

Close Ties: The MNF's headquarters is located at Chhimtalang, very close to Bangladesh's Ruma Bazar cantonment. The functionaries of the MNF civil wing, including 'vice-president' Zoramthanga along with the army top brass including its commander, 'brigadier-general' Tawnluia are stationed here. It is common knowledge among intelligence circles that the MNF maintains a regular liaison unit at Ruma Bazar, within the cantonment area, led by 'lieutenant-colonel' Lalrinmawia who liaises with the commander of the Chittagong-based 24 Army Division. "Lalrinmawia is even present at the routine briefings at the Bangladesh command. It is now almost as bad as it was in the East Pakistan days," remarked a police officer in Aizawl cynically.

The Centre has taken up the issue at the diplomatic level with Bangladesh but these efforts lack force. There was considerable alarm in North Block as reports came in of Laldenga's good personal equation with General Ershad who, as a young captain liaised with the MNF on behalf of the Pakistan Army in the late '60s. Rumours in Aizawl have it that Zoramthanga had visited Dacca recently for discussions with political and military functionaries.

It is unlikely that India will be able to prevent Laldenga's entry into Bangladesh which would probably be for a short period. Going by his past record, Laldenga will not be too keen to visit his jungle headquarters in the present situation. But as time passes, pressure on him to do so will be great because the MNF today is confused and a bit demoralised.

Difficulties: Most rebels today are married and have their families in the hide-outs. They waited patiently while the peace talks were on and hoped that Laldenga would bring them a diplomatic victory. Having failed to do that, Laldenga is finding it difficult to keep the organisation intact and to nip challenges to his authority while he lives in the snug comfort of Europe.

Laldenga faces challenges from two quarters. There are militants like 'colonel' Lalrawna who want action. There are tired men like some of his 'ministers' who want to come in from the cold. The first step in controlling the situation are some crucial transfers within the army set-up. For years Lalrawna, adjutant at the 'army headquarters' was the *de facto* army chief. He has been cut to size and posted as 'commander' of the TAC (Tactical) headquarters at Chhipui closer to the border. He has been replaced by 'colonel' Khawghingha, the earlier TAC headquarters commander. This is meant to restore some power to the army chief who has reportedly been feeling uneasy for some time. But this process cannot continue if Laldenga's absence is prolonged.

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The pashmina shawl and the snuff box test



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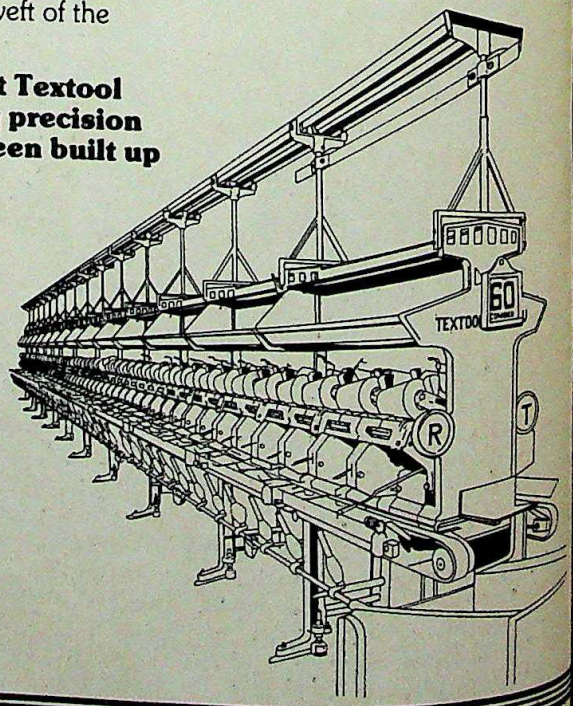
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Urs lying in state: untimely death

RNATAKA

n The Wake Of Urs

"UNITE or perish" was the warning given to Opposition parties in the state by former Karnataka chief minister Devraj Urs who died of a heart attack last week. It is ironical that Urs's demise just before a semblance of Opposition seemed realisable. And this despite touching a rock-bottom of 31 seats in 225-strong Lower House.

Urs's untimely death has not only or- his recently formed Karnataka nti Ranga but it has thrown the already rrayed Opposition out of gear. For Chief nister Gundu Rao, who seems to lead a rmed life, Urs's departure has come as a ch needed fillip to his flagging popularity. hough Rao had dismissed Urs as a "pa- iger", he had nevertheless been a force to kon with in the state.

Death struck Urs when he was at the ir of his political career. After ruling the e for eight years Urs emerged as a onal leader when he broke off from the ngress(I) and formed the Congress(U). ertheless his efforts to achieve Opposition y failed. Only last month Urs broke y from the Congress and formed the nti Ranga. However with his two closest es, Azeez Sait and K.H. Srinivas, desert- him and joining the Congress(I) the nti Ranga was reduced to seven members e Assembly. Today, despite being bereft leader with the stature or charisma of it will probably survive and attempt y with other Opposition parties.

New Leadership: The mantle of Oppo- n leadership in the state has now fallen the Janata Party headed by greying S.R. mmai. Its 59 members elected in the last mbly elections held in 1978 now stand at 13. Today it leads the United Democratic Front in the Assembly consisting of the Kranti Ranga, the Communist Party of India (CPI), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Maharashtra Ekkikaran Samithi (MES). Admitted Bommai: "Urs's death was a setback to the Opposition but it will not end our unity move."

The Janata Party itself is riven with factions. Likely defector and former president A.C. Deva Gowda was accused of hob-nobbing with Gundu Rao. But Gowda has belied fears and made up with the top leadership. Another cause for intra-party friction is that it is mainly made up of the two dominant caste groups in the state, the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats. This may also queer its election prospects. Nor does it have a leader with a mass base in the state.

Unfortunately the Janata Party has so far not been able to forge any electoral alliances with the BJP. Significantly in the recent by-elections for two constituencies in the state, the Congress(I) candidates won with considerably reduced margins. However the combined votes polled by the Janata and BJP exceeded the Congress(I) in one constituency and fell short in the other by just 700. The results were an eye-opener for the Opposition.

Futile Infighting: The Karnataka BJP by itself has no major power base in the state except for a few urban pockets. Headed by the fiery Legislative Council member A.K. Subbaiah, the party has not come to terms with the Janata Party of the Urs group. This is because of its national party's policies and its personality clashes with other Opposition leaders. Bommai cannot stand Subbaiah's acid tongue and Urs favoured Charan Singh to Vajpayee. But both parties have realised the futility of infighting. A straight fight between the Opposition and the Congress(I) for next year's assembly elections seems to be on the cards. With their minimal standings, the other Opposition parties—CPI, CPI-M, MES, Lok Dal, Republican Party of India and Muslim League—will perforce play second fiddle in the state.

But much more than the Opposition, Rao's enemies are within his party. Already K.T. Rathod, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee(I) president, has openly accused him of encouraging Brahmin communalism. Of course Rathod, with his tenuous standing within the party, is to be replaced soon. But the cracks are evident. S. Bangarappa, Rao's nemesis, is waiting to pounce on all *faux pas* that Rao commits.

BANGALORE NEWS PHOTOS



Subbaiah and Bommai: uneasy alliance

Rao is already compromised by his handling of the delicate language tussle that has engulfed the state. Sheepishly withdrawing his formula he recently agreed to take a consensus in the Assembly for making Kannada the prime language in the state. Further the farmers are on the rampage again and recent police firings in Shimoga killed three of them. Gravest of all, Rao's fall is imminent if the Governor gives sanction to Bommai's request to prosecute the chief minister for his questionable involvement in cement allocation.

With Rao's weakness being the Opposition's strength the late Urs's pipe dream of successful Opposition unity may be realised yet.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA

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T BENGAL

ivision The Ranks

IT WAS a case of the tail wagging the dog in West Bengal last fortnight. Two small partners of the ruling Left Front, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Forward Bloc (FB), atened to stay outside the ministry and by forced the Marxists to agree to e for the present their proposal to rcate some of the portfolios held by the parties in the previous government.

The open revolt by the two parties and declaration by their leaders that they no longer prepared to have things osed on them not only took away a lot the front's hitherto cohesive image—h stood in sharp contrast to the splin-d Congress(I)—but also indicated that he days to come Chief Minister Jyoti will face opposition, not only from the side in the Vidhan Sabha, but also hese allies of his party.

The Marxists themselves had been ap-ensive of such opposition for quite some in the nail-biting days of vote counting, n they suffered some unexpected losses, uestion uppermost in Alimuddin Street not whether the Front would be re-ed to power but whether the CPI-M would again be able to secure an absolute rity. Party workers made no secret of fear that without being in such a ion of strength they would be victims gular arm-twisting by the RSP and the the distribution of portfolios and policy ulation.

Self-interest: It is well known that in previous ministry the CPI-M, by virtue of umbers, had been able to keep its two citrant partners subdued at cabinet ings. It therefore came as a surprise , even with their present absolute ma-, the Marxists surrendered to the RSP FB on a vital question when everyone expected them to stand firm from the outset.

According to Marxist leaders, one re-why they agreed to maintain the status for the present was the suspicion that wo parties would not only stay away the ministry but might secretively side the Opposition to make things more ult for the Government. The two ers could not stomach the CPI-M's growth the last five years and their workers





Basu (top), Chakravorty (left) and Bhattacharya: incipient conflict

had on different occasions adopted an attitude towards the Marxists not much different from that of the Congress(I).

While the Marxist Ministry, which is sitting pretty because of its superior numbers would not have been affected in any way if the two parties had withheld their support, it clearly was not prepared to run the risk of letting the world know that the Front was a house divided against itself.

Of the two aggrieved parties the RSP had particular reason to feel sore as one of the portfolios which the Marxists wanted to bifurcate was Public Works, held by Jatin Chakravorty. The CPI-M had wanted the Housing Board to be taken away from his charge: at this Chakravorty saw red as such a move would have deprived him of one sure means of distributing favours.

Incompetence: In a situation of acute housing shortage, the low-priced government tenements are in great demand, and in the last five years Chakravorty had made quite a few out of turn allotments to keep influential people—including some newspapermen whom the Minister considers vital to his functioning—in good humour. Naturally, neither he nor his party could agree to such an important lever slipping out of their control. Similarly, Kanailal Bhattacharya of the FB would not agree to any interference with the Commerce and Industry Ministry, even though in the last five years his style of functioning did little good to the economy of the state.

However, the FB made one concession when they agreed not to renominate Bhakti Bhusan Mandal, a district town lawyer whose sole contribution as fisheries minister lay in formulating such wild schemes as pisciculture in the Himalayas and imports from America—which only added to the middle class Bengalis' irritation at having to buy an increasingly scarce commodity at sky-rocketing prices. Strangely enough now, fisheries has gone to the West Bengal Socialist Party, a recent entrant to the Front, which has set tongues wagging that the Marxists themselves did not take charge of this portfolio as they were not prepared to shoulder the blame for possible failure on a sensitive front.

Problems: The need to bifurcate some of the major portfolios arose from a feeling that without doing so proper attention could not be paid to some pressing problems. The Marxists have done this in the case of their own charges. Basu himself has been relieved of the power department as it was being felt for quite some time that the acute power crisis called for full-time attention which the chief minister could not give it.

Still, the others have not shown themselves to be keen; and though the subject is supposed to be under consideration it is questionable to what extent the RSP and FB will agree to their ministries being truncated. Pressures on them may only widen the cracks in the edifice, which is something that the Left Front, already burdened with an even more hardened Centre and a much more vocal opposition in the House, can ill afford.

—SUMANTA SEN

KERALA

Temple Tug-of-war



A RUN-DOWN temple on the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border has become the source of a heated border fracas between the two states. The temple, dedicated to the Goddess Kannagi, is situated in Mangaladevi, 14 miles from the huge wildlife sanctuary in Thekkadi in Idukki district of Kerala.

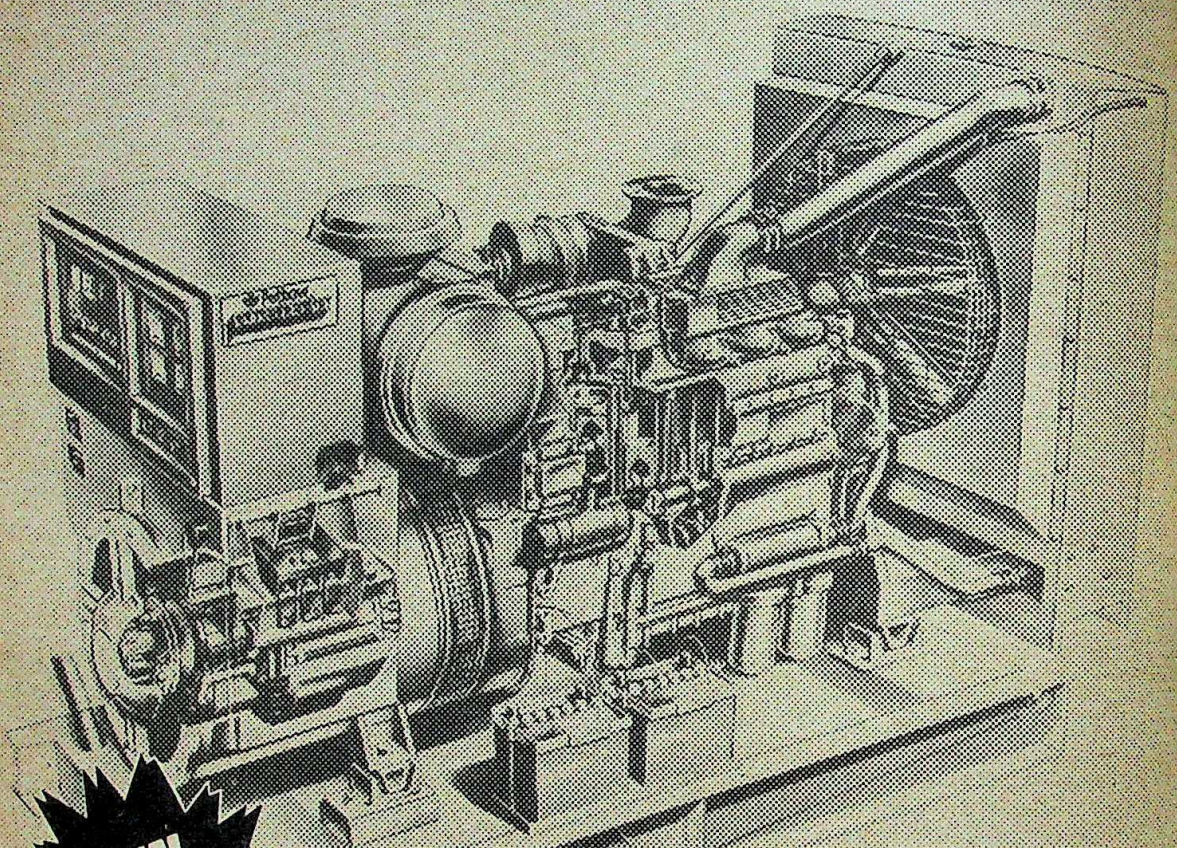
Trouble has been simmering in the area ever since May 10 when the Kerala police moved in to prevent a group of Tamilians from taking over the temple. The local authorities had to use force to evict the devotees who had come determined to install a new idol and conduct a festival themselves. Says police Sub-Inspector Gopalakrishnan Nair: "If we had not arrived on time, the Tamilians would have installed a new Kannagi idol and seized the temple from Kerala." Nair adds that the group was armed and had loudspeakers to frighten the

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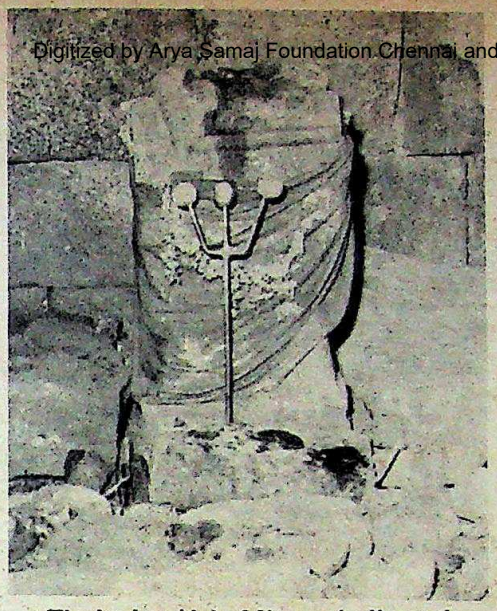
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in the region.

Buttressed Claims: The Kerala Government has moved swiftly to buttress its claims to the temple. Soon after he was sworn in as Kerala Chief Minister K. Karunakaran decided to produce documentary evidence to support its position. Karunakaran's statement, however, brought an equally quick response from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran (MGR). MGR said the temple belonged rightfully to the people of Tamil Nadu. For good measure he added that he would have Malayalee settlers evicted from Gudalur in Nilgiris district. (There are two towns named Gudalur in Tamil Nadu).

The dispute is motivated more by revenue favour than anything else. Kannagi is an extremely popular deity in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, though she is hardly worshipped in Kerala. The people of Gudalur in Theni district 12 km from the Kerala border have formed a Mangaladevi Kannagi Protection Committee under the leadership of P. Kamaraj, an affluent cardamom planter.



The broken idol of Kannagi: disputed

The local DMK MP and the AIADMK MLA are also actively involved in a campaign to see that the temple is made a part of Tamil Nadu. Said Kamaraj: "According to historical findings and the Kannagi legend the temple belongs to Tamil Nadu." Kamaraj wants to renovate the temple. R. Thamizhathan, secretary of the renovating committee adds: "The Kerala Government is paying scant respect to Kannagi because it will affect the importance of the Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala."

Survey Findings: But according to N.G. Unnithan, a former Kerala state director of archaeology, a recent survey conducted by the Government, whose findings have yet to be published, showed that 60 per cent of the temple is in Kerala and 40 per cent in Tamil Nadu. According to an archaeology department spokesman, the survey found that the watershed area falls in Kerala, which gives Kerala a claim to the temple. The boundary walls of the temple are however, in Tamil Nadu.

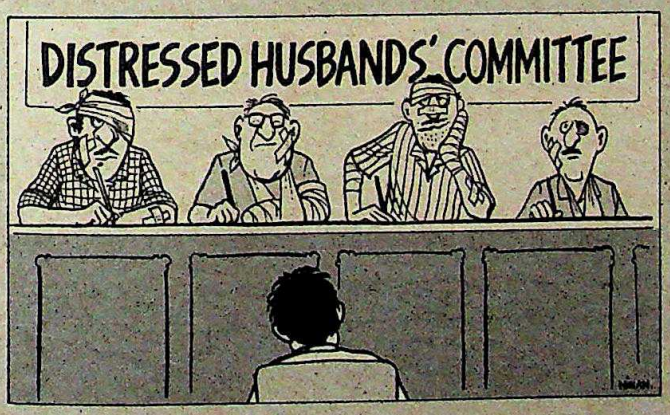
There is no doubt, however, that the temple is in a dilapidated state. When INDIA TODAY visited the spot deep in the Thekkadi reserve forest there were only a handful of guards and a few policemen there. The Kerala Government is however, drawing up plans to renovate the temple.

—SREEDHAR PILLAI in Thekkadi

THE SEXES

Striking Back

ALL MAY be fair in love and war but the men of Kanpur have decided that their better halves should no longer get the better of them. Flying the banner of revolt is Ram Gopal Puri, 30, a Kanpur businessman and general secretary of the Janata Party in the city who, last fortnight, formed the *Pati Manch* to come to the aid of distressed husbands. Puri ascribed the causes of the distress mainly to "constant, almost unbearable nagging of unassertive husbands about economic matters, mutual suspicions of infidelity and the excessive demands of so-called liberated women."



With him on the advisory committee are a panel of five lawyers who form the legal cell of the Manch, a general physician, a psychiatrist, a retired district judge and five others including a journalist. Said Puri: "I was surprised myself at the wide response the Manch has already received. As many as 196 letters from brow-beaten husbands from areas like Unnao, Farrukhabad, Hamirpur and Kanpur itself have been received in the last fortnight."

Puri, who lives in a joint family along with his four brothers in Kidwai Nagar, admitted that it was tongue-lashings received by his younger brother Girdharilal, 28, which inspired him to set up the Manch. Claiming it to be the first of its kind in the country, he plans to get it registered as soon as possible.

Improved Relations: Girdhari though reluctant to elaborate on his problem confessed that his troubles began eight years ago and the cause was that his wife, Renu, thought that he devoted too much time to business. He added that he had toyed with the idea of divorce but after he put his complaint in writing, the Manch members had intervened to improve his marital relations.

The man behind the Manch's activities is the retired judge who wishes to remain anonymous as he screens all applications for aid. The lawyers are committed to fight a case free of charge and the Manch, which is financed by contributions, is prepared to bear all legal expenses. Puri, however, maintains that legal action would be regarded as a last resort.

The Manch has had at least 20 complaints of severe cases of battered husbands:

- In the Gwatoli area of Kanpur a harassed teacher has complained about the all-too-ready hand of his wife who has added insult to injury by lodging five cases on allegedly trumped-up charges against him. In this case only the Manch has decided to take legal action; and
- A man from Hamirpur wrote in to say that he was so disturbed when his wife punched him that he met with an accident while riding his bicycle to work.

In such cases the Manch provides free medical treatment and some nominal financial aid to the aggrieved husbands. Puri feels that traumatic experiences such as these can drive people over the brink.

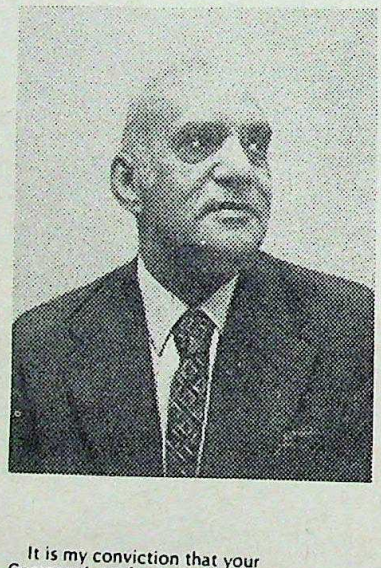
Puri sums up the situation by maintaining that enough is enough and that extreme provocation requires some sort of counteraction. So henpecked husbands of the world unite! Today Kanpur, tomorrow the world!

—ANAND SAGAR in Kanpur

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"The scent of resurgence in the economic environmen guides us to the path of high endeavour, to pastures fresh and gree



Excerpts from the Statement made by Mr. K.B. Lall, Chairman, on the occasion of the Fiftyse Annual General Meeting of Guest Keen Williams Limite held in Calcutta on 21st May, 1982

It is my conviction that your Company's performance in the year under report will be adjudged to be satisfactory. Fortunately, the severity of power shortage was not so intense as in the earlier years. There was marked improvement in the functioning of the economy's infrastructure. The position in regard to other constraints was also comparatively easier. The efforts to secure better capacity utilisation and step up the output to match rising demand have met with some success. In consequence, the overall Company results, both in terms of turnover and pre-tax profit, were higher than in 1980, by 24% and 41% respectively.

Based on better trading results your Directors have recommended a dividend of 16%, and improvement by two percentage points over last year. Your Directors have also recommended the issue, subject to various statutory approvals, of Bonus Shares in the proportion of one for three existing equity shares. The twin recommendations have been widely welcomed. I am sure these will meet with your approval.

As we complete 60 years of our life, it is time to reflect on our achievements and reset our sights in the context of the nation's response to the challenges that confront its economy over the eighties.

Despite our modest beginnings we have inherited a noble legacy. At the inception of our operations in 1922 we began as suppliers to the Indian Railways which at that point of time were imparting a crucial impulse to the national economy's growth. Since then the national economy is transformed beyond recognition. With it we too have undergone a tremendous transformation. Our products have multiplied, our talents have acquired new dimensions, and our corporate urge to serve the sectors that subserve growth finds expression in the contribution we make to the rapid development of the electrical, transportation and construction industries.

We manufacture the widest range of stampings, laminations and metal pressed components in the country. In pioneering these technologies many many years ago, we were developing our potential to serve the electrical and automotive industries then in their infancy. We have maintained the thr of technology through the developm of cost effective tooling and introduc of sophisticated techniques to facili miniaturisation. We have designed a developed three-dimensional close tolerance, deep-drawn, metal pressed components; these have met the requirements of the automotive secto a variety of ways.

In 1952 we pioneered the manufac of special alloy steels through the electrically melted arc furnace route were the first to produce sulphurised cutting steel and later developed the leaded varieties entirely with our own technology. Over the years we have expanded our capacities and upgrade our technical capabilities to make fiftyfive thousand tons of quality allo and special steels to meet the exactin requirements of our discerning customers. And yet owing to persistin power shortage our output has woefu lagged behind targets and we have consistently failed to reap a reasonab return from the large investments ma in our Steel Division.

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to the customer base. We will be selecting the equipment carefully, looking for processes and techniques that could have a bearing on cost and quality, and aiming at widening the product range.

Although conscious of the mercurial characteristics of some of the variables in our politico-economic environment we recognise the strategic imperative of deepening our interest in technology intensive sectors. We are vigorously exploring several interesting possibilities and seeking investment options in the promising area of automotive components and custom built equipment. What holds our diverse endeavours together and lends direction and perspective to your Company's search for its corporate destiny is a new spirit of enterprise and innovation. It is through managerial interaction with current challenges and compulsions that we expect to succeed in enhancing your Company's competence to contribute to industrial growth and technological advance.

The projects already on the anvil involve an investment of around Rs 50 crores of which Rs 27.50 crores are proposed to be raised through internal generation and loans from development banks and institutions and Rs 22.50 crores by way of convertible debentures. You have before you a resolution empowering your Company to raise the required capital. It is our intention to issue convertible debentures through prospectus with substantial preference allocation in favour of Company's resident equity shareholders. This would enable you to participate in the Company's growth and prosperity. I trust you will also welcome our proposal to broaden the base of the Company's shareholding by throwing open a portion of the issue to the public so that new investors are also able to invest their savings profitably in your Company's expansion. You will notice that with the completion of the process of converting debentures to shares non-resident shareholding will come down from 59% to 45%.

The relative reduction in the financial stake held by our international associates, Guest Keen & Nettlefolds, does not reflect any diminution of interest on their part in GKW's future fortunes. In fact we have received wholehearted co-operation from them in working out the new projects we are now poised to launch. They share our aspiration to update production processes and enter high technology areas. We have continued to enjoy unrestricted access to their accumulated knowledge and skills. They have also offered to share with us the information they gather for their own use on the latest technological developments in more advanced economies; as also the research and development work they undertake to formulate more effective technologies for the future. I take this opportunity to thank them for their co-operation, for their help so generously given, and for the opportunity to work together on introducing and adapting more advanced techniques.

It will be an error if while focusing attention on future goals, we overlook persisting weaknesses in our industrial performance. Fortunately, there is evidence of a growing concern over the declining trend in the ratio of output to capital. To reverse this trend has become a matter of great urgency. That is why a beginning to this end has been made by designating the current year as the year of productivity. However, recent measures to restrict credit to productive sectors have led to a contrary consequence. Electricity Boards are unable to pay for their requirements, aspiring truck owners cannot fund their purchases; farmers with need for tractors have limited access to cheap loans. In turn the electrical and transportation industries to whose needs for industrial intermediates we cater have experienced difficulties in maintaining a smooth flow of payments and orders. As a result of these chain reactions, working capital has been under severe pressure and industrial organisations such as ours have had little option other than to reduce output and slacken the effort to maximise capacity utilisation. It looks as though the economy is moving into the reverse gear. This is of course contrary to the declared objectives. I imagine remedial measures will soon be taken to help re-build the tempo for a meaningful productivity movement.

The word 'productivity' means different things to different people. In its most easily understood form in the factory it represents higher machinery utilisation ratio and lower machine down time periods, as also more economical use of raw material and tooling. There are other areas of higher management where optimisation of inputs is vital to secure higher productivity at the plant level. For instance, it must be ensured that there are zero defects, there are no supply failures, the demand is both anticipated and stimulated, and uninterrupted cash flow is maintained to avoid interruptions on the production line. These are objectives that can be secured primarily through efficacious co-operation and co-ordination at all levels and between all inter-acting functions. It is only through team work that optimum results can be achieved.

Within the GKW family we have always paid special attention to cultivate this team spirit. I consider it a privilege to be able to look back at GKW's achievements over the last 60 years and have the opportunity to express on your behalf, on behalf of my colleagues and myself sincere appreciation to all members of the GKW family, past and present, for their dedicated service which has made it possible for the Company to arrive at its present position in the national firmament. A special word of thanks is due to them for standing by the Company through thick and thin.

(This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting).

GKW

Meridian/GKW/11

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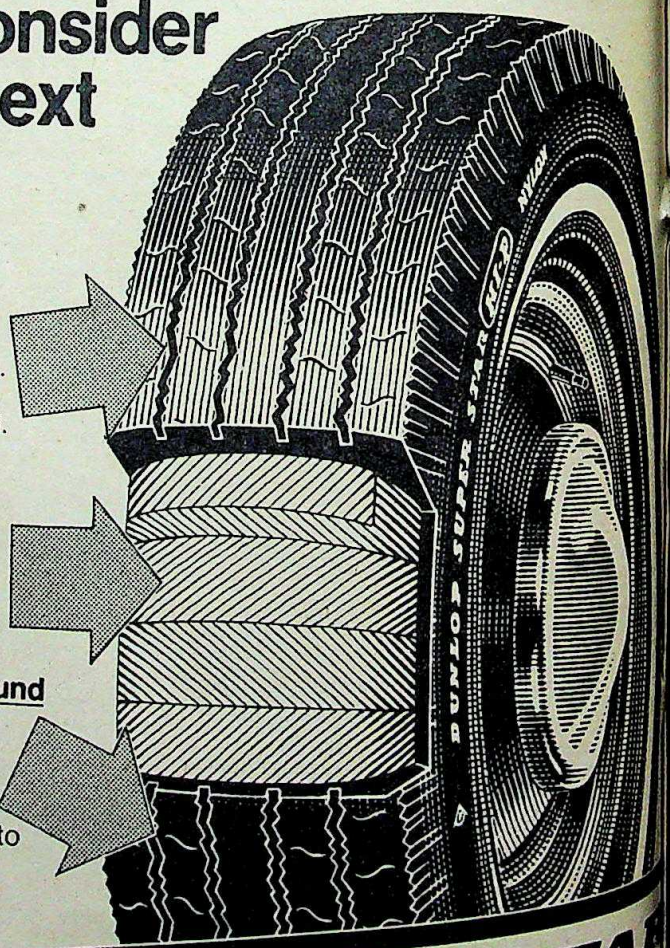
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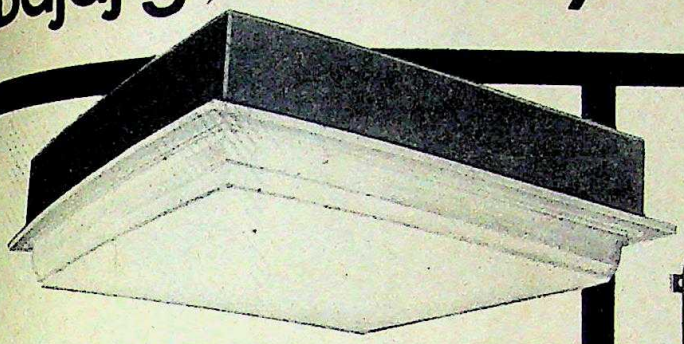
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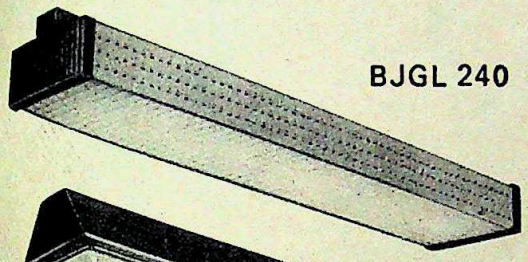
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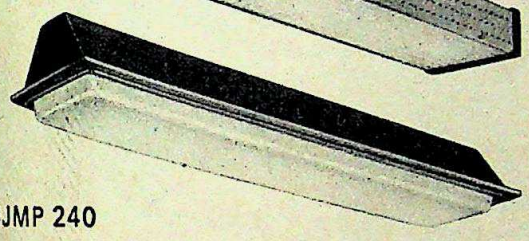


DECORATIVE

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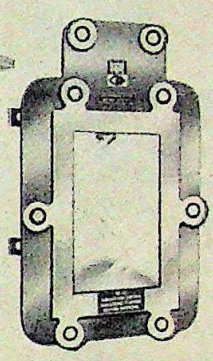


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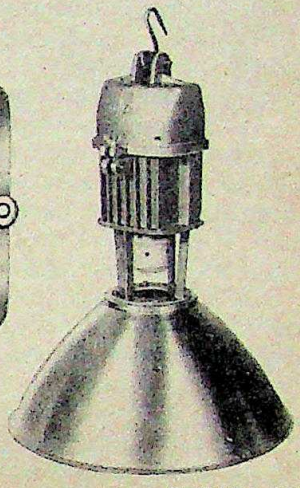


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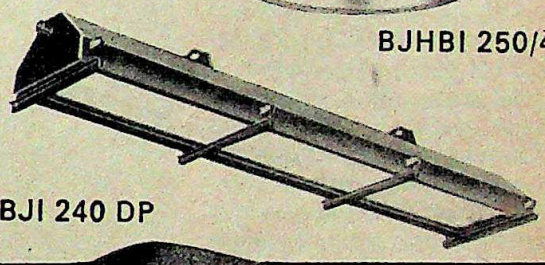
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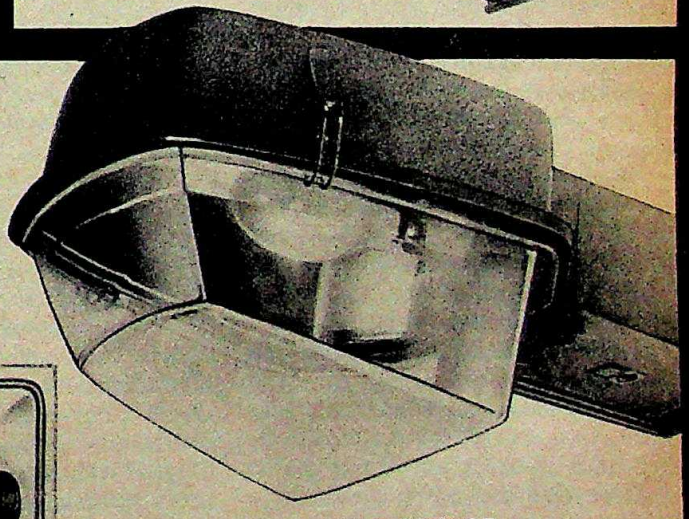
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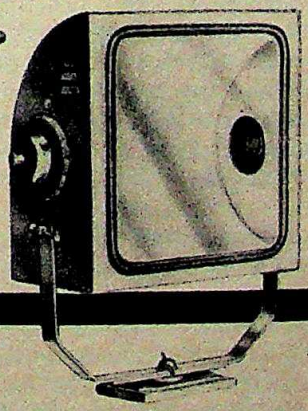
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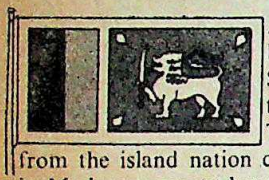
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SRI LANKA

Taming The Tigers



A diplomatic row between India and Sri Lanka on the extradition of Tamil extremists from the island nation caught last month in Madras seems to have been averted for the time being with Sri Lanka going slow on its extradition demand. The Sri Lanka Inspector-General of Police, Rudra Rajasingham reportedly told External Affairs Ministry officials in Delhi last fortnight that extradition proceedings would be requested only after the arrested extremists had been tried for offences committed in India.

Three pistol-packing members of the Liberation Tigers, a group which is banned in Sri Lanka because it wants a separate Tamil state on the island and uses violent means to achieve its ends, were nabbed on a busy thoroughfare in Madras on May 19. A fourth involved in the same incident was later caught in neighbouring Chingleput district. Ironically, the four were apprehended because the Tigers movement is sharply split and two of them tried to gun down the other two of the opposing faction.

According to Madras police, Prabhakaran and Sivakumaran had just emerged from a café when they spotted rivals Jyotheeswaran and Uma Maheswaran alight from a motorcycle. Prabhakaran was the first to open fire. Jyotheeswaran was hit by five bullets but Maheswaran escaped and took to his heels. Prabhakaran and Sivakumaran also tried to get away but ran smack into a traffic outpost near the café. Police constables who were alerted by the commotion quickly nabbed them.

As the three were foreign nationals, the case was transferred to the state Crime Branch of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) because, as Police Commissioner S. Sripal puts it, "it was bound to have international ramifications." As a matter of routine protocol the Sri Lanka Deputy High Commissioner in Madras, K.N. Samarasinghe, was informed about the arrests. When Samarasinghe telephoned the Sri Lanka Defence Ministry personnel in Colombo and told them of the capture, they could hardly believe their ears. For years the Lanka policemen had combed the northern province for the very same people but to no avail.



RAJ CHENGAPPA

Tamil Nadu police party escorting Prabhakaran (left) and deputy Sivakumaran: prize

"The Tigers have been tamed," announced President J.R. Jayawardene in Colombo matching the occasion with his usual dry sense of humour. He was addressing a Lord Baden Powell commemoration meeting. The thought that the Tamil Liberation Tigers, now riven by a bloody fratricidal strife that has led its two top leaders, Uma Maheswaran and Velupillai Prabhakaran into a Madras jail will turn into nice little boy scouts may be wishful at best. On the other hand, the possibility that the "Tigers" will cease armed actions against the state, at least temporarily, and slip back into their jungle hide-outs and lie low, is a strong one.

The Inspector-General of Police, Rudra Rajasingham shares his President's optimistic view but is also willing to share the credit for breaking the back of the Tamil armed resistance with the Tamil Nadu police. "What we have done," says Rajasingham, "is to give the Indian authorities a complete dossier on terrorist activities here, and soon you may see the whole lot of them in Indian police custody."

The Tiger movement began a
1972 as an extremist wing of the TUL
much is, however, known about the
origins of the movement. Initially, th
targets of the Tigers were Tamilians
they believed, had betrayed their caus
separate Tamil state. At one stage o
terrorist campaigns, their grip over th
thern province of Sri Lanka was so co
that policemen from the southern ha
sidered a transfer to Jaffna as a fo
punishment.

When the Sri Lanka Government
out that although it had proscribe
Tigers in 1977 they continued their ac
merrily, it appointed a special securit
commander of the army and police,
quarters in Jaffna to control ex
activities. With the special force p
effective, both Prabhakaran and M
waran slipped into Tamil Nadu in
1979.

Of the three extremists that the
city police had caught, 28-year-old P
karan alias Thambi, Maniam and
galam, was one of the chief leaders

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...whom the Lanka police files describe as their "most wanted man". Initially ...as a bicycle thief, Prabhakaran is alleged ...have committed 18 murders and robbed ...banks of Rs 10 million in the course of ...his 26-year-old career as a terrorist. The ...police had of identification a photograph taken when he was ...19 years old. Maheswaran alias Mukundan, ...who had escaped in the shoot-out, was ...described as the number one terrorist and ...is alleged involved in nine murders apart ...from a bank robbery which fetched him Rs ...2 million. Each carried a reward of three ...lakh rupees on their heads for their capture. "We ...were thrilled to hear that Prabhakaran was ...finally caught," said a Lanka CID officer who ...had been unsuccessfully trailing him for the ...past six years.

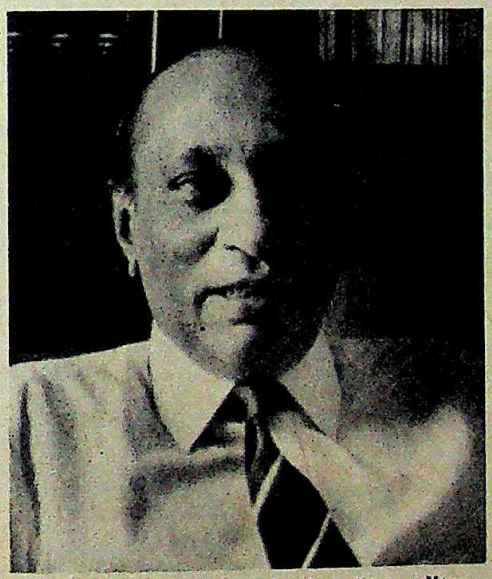
...Reward: Rajasingham, who ironically is ...now himself, was on tour of the hilly ...district of Nuwara Eliya when news of the ...arrest reached Colombo. The Defence ...Secretary immediately summoned him and ...asked him to fly to Madras along with ...a crack CID team headed by its director ...Upatissena Rajapakshe. Even as they were ...flying out of Colombo, Deputy Defence ...Minister T.B. Weerapitya announced a cash ...award of one million rupees to the Tamil ...Nadu police for capturing the terrorist.

...Before Rajasingham was flying to New ...Delhi came the news that Maheswaran had ...been captured by the Tamil Nadu police in ...Vellore in Chingleput district. Maheswaran ...is alleged to have injured two bystanders ...before he opened fire while the police were ...trying to arrest him.

...Tiger sympathisers in Colombo flew ...Mr Chandrahasan, an advocate and son ...of former Tamil leader Chelvanayakam, to ...seek support for the extremists in Madras. ...They saw this as another opportunity to display ...anti-Sinhala chauvinism especially after the politi...cal parties in the state had vociferously ...condemned the riots in Sri Lanka last ...August (INDIA TODAY, September 1–15) a ...delegation of four lawyers belonging to the ...AIADMK, DMK and Congress(I) was formed ...to protest against Sri Lanka's call for extradi...tion. Said the bespectacled Chandrahasan: ..."If they are extradited they would be merci...lessly tortured and then killed. There will be ...nobody left of them."

...The arrests quickly became an issue in ...Tamil Nadu politics where politicians vie with one ...another to espouse the cause of the Sri Lanka ...Tamils. The Crime Branch raided the houses ...of three members of the Opposition DMK ...following that Maheswaran had tipped them ...off. They also raided the home of a legislator ...close to Chief Minister M.G. Rama...chandran's AIADMK party but the DMK ...angrily said this was "eyewash" claiming ...that the DMK has been helping the Sri Lanka Tamils. DMK leader M. Karunanidhi then called a press conference and announced he would fight any move for extradition. His close associate Murasoli Maran immediately called an all-party meet to extend support to the caged Tigers. MGR, realising that the arrests had become a local issue, instructed his police to cool off. "Let the law take its own course for extradition," he said tamely when he realised that the Tigers had unwittingly stirred a hornet's nest. Says IGP of the Crime Branch, K. Mohandas, "We are only interested in the law and order aspect and are not concerned with extradition or the reward money. We only want to prevent Madras from becoming another Chicago."

However, in Sri Lanka MGR was quoted by the *Sun* correspondent as saying, "We are not concerned with the crimes alleged to have been perpetrated by the arrested Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka." The daily *Island* published the news that MGR had placed the "Tigers" in the same category as Subhas Chandra Bose. The lasting impression left by these reports confirmed the old suspicion that the Colombo Government



RAJ CHENGAPPA

IGP Rajasingham: sharing the credit

(and the Sinhalese) may have friends in Delhi but none in Madras.

Extradition: Meanwhile the issue was being hotly debated in New Delhi, as Sri Lanka has no treaty with India for extraditing criminals. With India seeking the extradition of the self-proclaimed Khalistan leader Jagjit Singh Chauhan from the US, New Delhi could not really give a straightforward negative reply. The Indian External Affairs Ministry also had to contend with the turmoil building up in Tamil Nadu against extradition. Moreover, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's relations with President Julius Jayawardene are reportedly not all that friendly which could be another factor slowing the Indian response.

Both the Government and the Sinhalese public however are intrigued and irritated by the way in which the arrest of seven men, including two of Sri Lanka's "most wanted" men has become an issue in the tangled politics of Tamil Nadu. Correspondents reporting from Madras to the Sri Lankan press have written of public meetings, demonstrations, poster campaigns and petitions to Prime Minster Indira Gandhi, all on behalf of "The Madras Seven". They vehemently oppose the idea of extradition, and want the men tried in India.

Judging the lukewarm Indian reaction, Sri Lanka, which had initially announced that it wanted the extremists to be extradited, clarified that no application for extradition had yet been made formally to the Indian Government but such a move was on the anvil. The Sri Lanka policemen were not so "thrilled" when they flew into Madras and faced a barrage of Tamil chauvinism. A visibly perturbed Rajasingham said, "It's a traumatic experience for us. Our bandits seem to have been forgotten completely. Instead it is becoming political. We still have a lot of things to be ironed out with the External Affairs Ministry. But we are hoping that the cards will turn in our favour."

Movements: What has irked Sri Lanka most is that in recent years Tamil Nadu has become a "haven" for extremists. The Indian coastline can be reached within two hours by boat from the northern tip of Lanka and extremists can easily slip into Tamil Nadu. Said Rajasingham: "They move into Tamil Nadu like a lot of flotsam and jetsam." Most of them use motorboats to land at Rameswaram, Vedaranyam and Keezhakarai. They smuggle electronic goods and jewellery to sell in India. Salem is considered the key Indian base because a lot of the Tigers' relatives are reportedly staying there. Although the Tamil Nadu police know of their movements in the state no action is taken because, as one officer put it: "They had not created a law and order problem in the state till now." Many of the Tigers have close links with political parties in the state and frequently visited their offices in Madras.

The internecine battles of the Tigers appeared to have intensified in the wake of the October 1981 riots in Sri Lanka. Matters came to a head when Prabhakaran is said to have killed Maheswaran's deputy in Jaffna. Subsequently, Prabhakaran slipped into Tamil Nadu with Maheswaran hot on his heels vowing to finish him off. But the Tamil Nadu police had other plans for them. Prabhakaran is reported to have told one of his lawyers after his recent arrest: "This is the price of disunity."

—RAJ CHENGAPPA in Madras

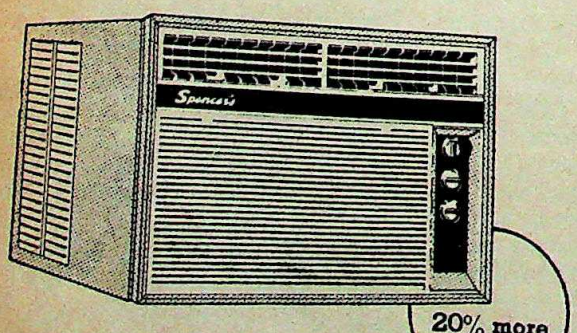
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e Bhuttos Besieged

THE TROUBLES of the Bhutto family never seem to end. Ever since Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was hanged, his wife Nusrat ghter Benazir have shuttled between house arrest. And Pakistan President Zia has never made a secret of the at he holds the family accountable for ds of the past. To this end he has deep into the records of the Bhutto e result of all this sleuthing has been es which could land the family in dire al difficulties, if upheld. The Govern- has sued for the recovery of Rs 55 lakh ther which Bhutto is said to have propriated.

Allegations: One has been filed for overy of Rs 8.2 which Bhutto is to have misused secret service It is alleged by overnment that dishonestly mis- priated' Rs 6.9 rom secret ser- ds for the Pak- People's Party Of this amount Government that Bhutto Rs 2.1 lakh to hid Hasan Mir, eputy secretary- al of the PPP, and er Rs 4.8 lakh to Nasrullah Khan k, president of the PPP in NWFP. The state suit also alleges that Bhutto Rs 44,000 to Naya Daur Motors of ds for the repair and freight charges e jeeps belonging to the NWFP unit of rty. He is also said to have printed the nifesto in Baluchi, paying Rs 6,000 the secret service funds and then ared fake certificates declaring that oney had been spent in the public rpose.

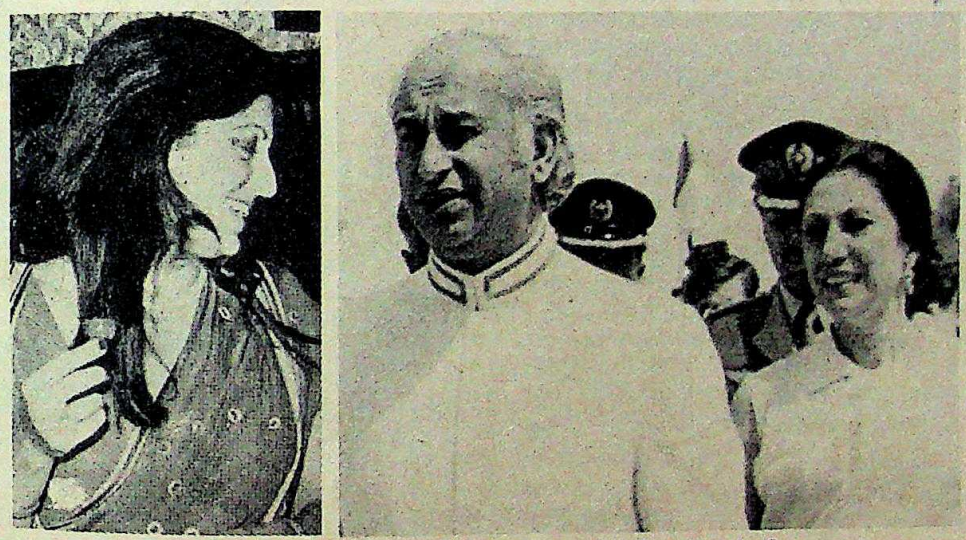
Besides this the Government also claims around May 1976 Bhutto spent Rs 0 to buy a Toyota jeep from a company ed National Motors Ltd. This jeep was nt to his ancestral home Al-Murtaza arkana for his own personal use.

Huge Sums: The second case against o's heirs involves even bigger sums. In e Government claims that Bhutto spent lakh for improvement of his mansion in Karachi and Larkana. This case was investigated by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). On the basis of the investigation Bhutto was arrested in 1978. However, after he was hanged the case was dismissed by the High Court. Now the Government is pursuing its efforts to recover the money by filing a suit against the family.

It is stated in this suit that in the very first week of assuming office, Bhutto told his military secretary that while visiting Karachi and Larkana he would stay in his own houses. After this, all through his tenure as prime minister, he is said to have forced the Public Works Department to spend nearly Rs 50 lakh for structural improvements, additions, alterations, electrical work and having air-conditioning plants installed.

Initially Bhutto is said to have agreed to pay this sum, but in the end he only paid Rs 3 lakh. The suit also maintains that the air-conditioning plant installed in Bhutto's house in Larkana cost Rs 5 lakh but he only paid Rs 71,000 for it, which was supposed to be 50 per cent of the depreciated value of the plant.

Bhutto is said to have done the same thing in his other house, 70, Clifton in Karachi. The air-conditioning plant for this house was ordered in 1974 through the Pakistan Embassy in the US and customs duty amounting to over Rs 5.5 lakh on the import of the equipment was evaded. Instead he again had a valuation done and ended up paying Rs 1.77 lakh on the depreciated value of the plant. In all the Government claims that it spent more than Rs 50 lakh on the plants and got back only slightly over Rs 3 lakh.



Husna (left), Bhutto and Nusrat: paying for past sins?

Protracted Battles: Nearly all the family have been dragged into the suits. Two of his widows, Amir Begum and Nusrat Bhutto have been impleaded as defendants. Besides them, his two daughters Benazir and Sanam and his sons, Murtaza and Shahnawaz are also defendants. His second wife Nusrat has been appearing in the High Court in Karachi regularly to defend the suits. The court has also directed the Bhutto family not to sell their two houses in Larkana and Karachi,or their agricultural land and other property.

Meanwhile Bhutto's third wife, Husna Sheikh, who has always stayed away from the limelight, is also finding herself in trouble. Husna fled from Pakistan just before Bhutto was ousted, in 1977. She is now said to be living in one of the Gulf countries where she owns a hotel. She has now found herself pursued by the income tax department which has issued notices against her for the recovery of dues of Rs 8 lakh. The department has already tried to recover this money by auctioning a piece of land belonging to her in Karachi's posh Clifton locality. However, the public auction failed to attract bidders and the 2,000 sq yard plot was sold for a mere Rs 2.75 lakh which has brought prices crashing down in the area.

But prospective buyers who stayed clear of the sale were probably wise. Husna has already challenged the sale in the Sind High Court and the court has ordered the maintenance of the status quo. Husna's writ seeks a declaration that the income tax demand of Rs 8 lakh be struck down.

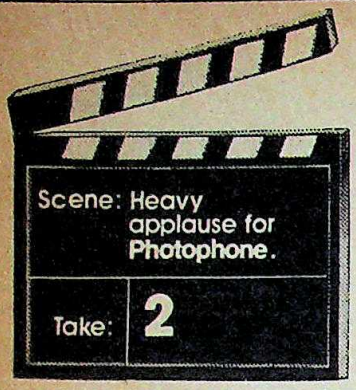
While these cases drag on through the courts, some other of Bhutto's friends are finding themselves in trouble. Jam Sadiq Ali, a former PPP minister, and close friend of Bhutto's has been sued by the nationalised Habib Bank for the recovery of Rs 2.1 lakh taken as a loan. He is alleged to have drawn this money as an overdraft but never paid it back. Sadiq Ali has also fled the country and is in Dubai where he is running a hotel.

Nobody knows how these cases will end, but the family is understandably sore about having to face protracted legal battles. One family source puts it bluntly when he says: "General Zia's coup against Bhutto was codenamed 'Operation Fairplay'. This, however, is no fairplay but total foulplay."

—QUTUBUDDIN in Karachi

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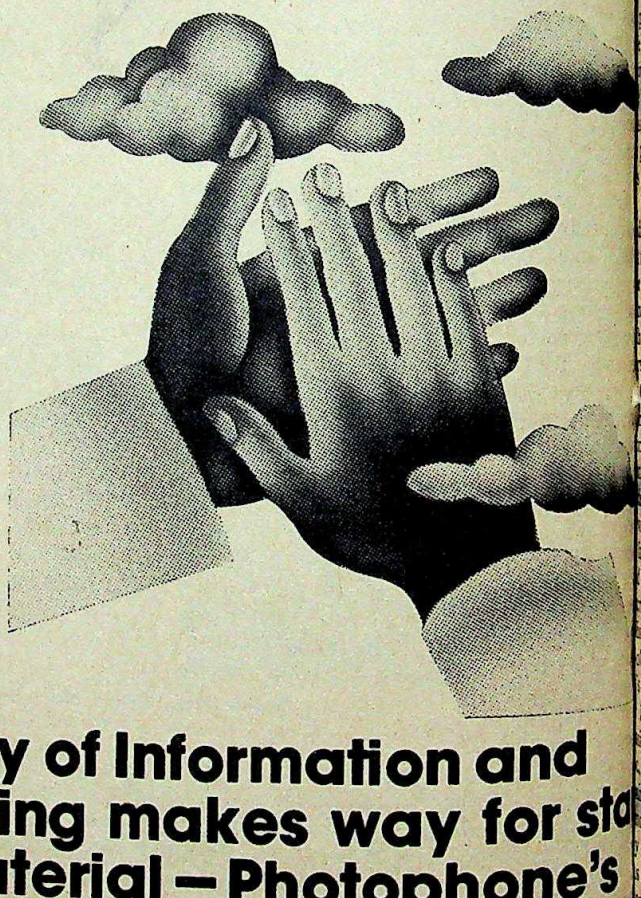
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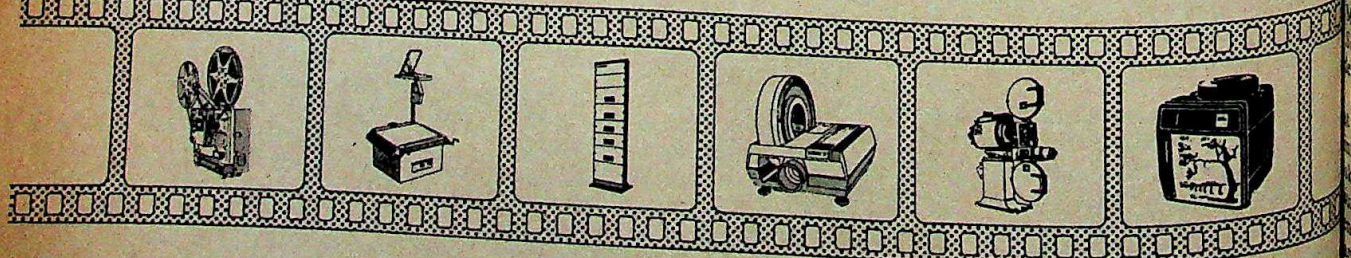
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POLAND Deceptive Calm

WARSAW wears no battle scars. Contrary to popular belief, there are no stern-faced Soviet troops in Warsaw itself and streets are not patrolled by black-veiled Polish soldiers. Occasionally, the broad avenues of this historic city (population 1.5 million) echo to the sound of boots as Polish troops march past on routine duties. Since the drastic price rises of the past few months, queues at food shops have shifted to ice cream kiosks. The *kawiarnie* (taverns) are full of Poles gossiping over glasses of beer or *kawa* (coffee). "Business girls", as Warsaw's young, attractive prostitutes style themselves, throng the streets in search of stray tourists.

Warsaw under martial law appears to be dramatically different from expectations but there is an underlying air of uncertainty. The older generation is frankly worried about the present while the younger, faced with growing unemployment, have no answers to what the future holds.

Credibility Crisis: The only certainty in Poland today is that General Jaruzelski faces a formidable task and that his biggest crisis right now is one of credibility. "If he succeeds in overcoming the crisis of credibility, he will go down in history as a Polish hero. If he fails, he will be condemned as a traitor," said a Polish fellow-traveller on the Lot flight as it banked above Warsaw. A top party official in Warsaw added gloomily: "Nobody has a final solution for the country's problems, least of all Jaruzelski."

If that statement sounds rebellious considering Poland's position in the Soviet bloc, there is ample reason for such bold pessimism. Though the counter-demonstrations to the official May Day parades were peaceful affairs, riots erupted two days later as the Poles commemorated their first "liberal constitution", adopted on May 3, 1791. The Constitution riots and massive demonstrations on May 13 showed that Solidarity, or *Solidarnosc*, continues to enjoy massive popular support.

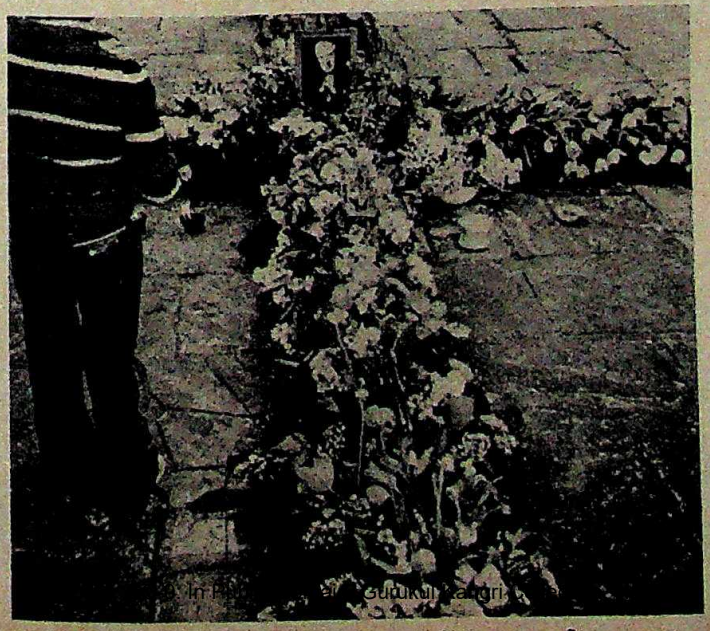
But there are undeniable signs that the Government is slowly, if painfully, winning control. Jaruzelski was not far wrong when he welcomed two top-ranking Soviets—General Kulikov, supreme commander of the Warsaw Pact forces, and Rusakow, secretary of the Soviet communist party central committee who rushed to Warsaw on May 17—that his government had the situation under control and that Poland would remain a loyal ally. The reasons, however, are hardly of his own making.



Jaruzelski: formidable task

Hold Lost: For one, the Solidarity leadership was divided on the effectiveness of the May 3 riots, a logical fall-out from the arrest of its top leadership including Walesa. This has succeeded in dissipating much of the hold the organisation has in the country and prevented it from reorganising itself effectively after the crack-down, or "war" as the December 17 events are popularly referred to. The second factor was the disassociation of the powerful Catholic Church from the demonstrations. In an episcopal message, Polish Primate Archbishop Josef Glemp stated that such demonstrations were "delaying social accord, halting steps towards normalisation and leading the young astray."

A floral cross: religion lives on



But even so, the mostly young demonstrators are in a militant mood. Their anthem during the riots of last month was an echo of the one used by the conspirators and insurrectionists of the Polish uprising in the 1820s. It went:

Now is the day of blood and glory,
Now it brings the dawn of freedom,
Arise Poland, break your bonds.
Now's your triumph or your death
Rise all Poles, and bayonet fix.
Live in Freedom, Poland live!

The Poles, however, are painfully aware that the 1828 uprising was a failure but since most of the leaders of the banned Solidarity movement are either under arrest or underground, nobody quite knows what the fate of the Solidarity uprising will eventually be. But then neither are they sure what the fate of the present government will be and there is a general air of suspicion which is reflected even in official circles.

Uphill Task: In the Council of Ministers Building opposite the Chopin monument in Warsaw, Jerzy Urban, the government spokesman, makes no bones about the fact that the martial law regime has far from gained social credibility. "Public opinion," he says, "takes different attitudes to government actions, so a general assessment of the extent to which the Government has achieved social credibility is difficult." The level of credibility, he says, is much higher in the countryside and among the older people while the youth and the intellectuals are bitterly opposed to martial law. But over 14 million Poles out of 36 million are below 25—a warning signal.

The is also a third section of the populace which is gradually gaining credibility and which seems to be supporting its viewpoint with past experience. The remedy they propose for Poland, as suggested by the "positivists" nearly a century ago, is to reform the social, economic and political structures which led to the birth of Solidarity in the wake of the August 1980 strikes. However, they believe this must be achieved within the parameters of Poland remaining a member of Comecon and the Warsaw Pact.

One reason why the positivists have gained strength is Polish disappointment with the West. The western sanctions against Poland, at the initiative of US President Ronald Reagan, have embitterred a majority of Poles, as they have increased the sufferings of the common man. The Government, there-

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fore, is somewhat justified blaming on the sanctions some of the economic hardships faced currently by the Polish people. "The sanctions have failed to help lift martial law, release internees or speed up the national dialogue," says a Warsaw school teacher.

Polish Courage: Meanwhile, the celebrated Polish resilience to suppression and hardship still stands unbowed. In the centre of the historic Victory Square in the middle of Warsaw lies a floral cross where hundreds of passers-by stop till the midnight curfew drives everybody indoors.

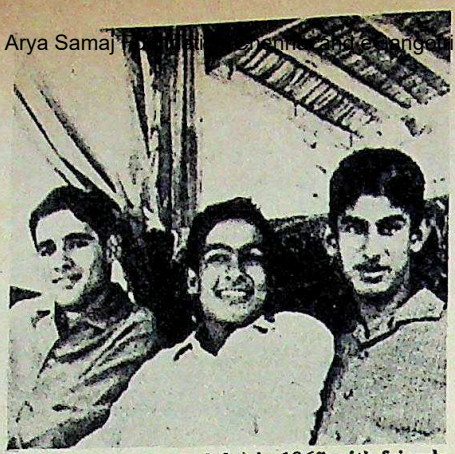
Another, less noticeable symbol of Polish cheerfulness in the face of deprivation is the rash of Polish jokes that have been making the rounds. The favourite at the moment is the one about the Zomo (a militiaman) who goes to church for confession. Inside the cabin, he whispers to the priest: "Father, I have killed a Zomo comrade." The priest does not respond so the Zomo repeats his statement. Still no response. Exasperated, the Zomo says it a third time. Finally, the bored voice of the priest comes from behind the partition: "My son, do not speak of your accomplishments. Confess your sins." — RAMESH JAURA in Warsaw

UNITED STATES

A Plan That Went Awry

THOUGH lesser known than his father, Mohammed Yunus, the controversial member of the Emergency coterie, Adil Shahryar, 35, did manage to earn some individual notoriety as part of the Sanjay Gandhi clique during his more rebellious younger years. Since then, Shahryar has been living abroad in England and the US, gaining a reputation as a businessman with an eye for the fast buck. Last month, however, Shahryar hit the headlines following his arrest in the US for a case of alleged fraud. To get more details regarding the case and Shahryar's side of the story, INDIA TODAY's ROHINI NILEKANI *travelled to Homestead, Florida, where he is currently under detention, and met Shahryar and his attorneys. Her report.*

ADIL Shahryar, now being held without bond at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre, Homestead, Florida, seems remarkably cheerful for a man sentenced to as many years in prison as he has been alive. Having been tried and found guilty on five counts including felony and fraud by a Florida district court, Shahryar has been sentenced by US Federal Court Judge J.W. Kehoe to five consecutive terms totalling 35 years and is being kept under maximum security at the Florida jail. And yet, except for occasionally running his tongue over dry lips, Shahryar, fair-skinned and bespectacled, wearing the bright orange jail uniform and metal belt across his generous girth, shows no sign of desperation whatsoever.



Shahryar (extreme right) in 1963 with friends Sanjay Gandhi and Ajitabh Bachchan on holiday in Kashmir

Shahryar was arrested on August 30, 1981 by state authorities in Miami on an arson charge of attempting to set fire to his room at the Sheraton Beach Hotel. However, on subsequent investigation and information supplied by Shahryar himself, a more complex plot emerged. He was remanded to the custody of Federal authorities under an unusually high bond of $1 million (Rs 90 lakh). Later, on trial, Shahryar was found guilty of, among other charges, attempting to place an explosive with the intent of endangering a ship, of making false statements to defraud the shipping authorities as well as the American Express International Banking Corporation.

The court believes that Shahryar, whose company, Carribbean International Investment Corporation, had a contract with Shapton Products Ltd of England to supply them with 25,000 programmed video cassettes, in fact substituted this shipment with scrap paper. He intended to set this on fire in order to later claim $243,750 (Rs 21,93,750) from the American Express for which sum Shapton had authorised them to extend credit to Shahryar's company.

Shahryar claims innocence however of any scheme to defraud either the American Express or Shapton. According to him two executives of the company that was to supply him the cassettes had actually come up with a plot to plant a smoke bomb in the container wih the scrap paper. But this was only intended to delay the ship's departure. Apparently the cassette order was not ready and the suppliers hoped to find excuse to save the $750,000 (Rs 67,50,000) contract with Shapton which was to expire the same day. Shahryar claims that he disagreed with the plan and fell out with his suppliers, after which they attempted to set fire to h
Currently the two men are absconi

In the opinion of Shahryar attorney, Richard Hammer, one of tors that went against his client is that Shahryar, without his consent, letter of confession to the presiding explained that he had done so becaus "tired of being in jail". Hammer beli letter would jeopardise any chanc had. He thus negotiated with the pro for a deal whereby if Shahryar pleade on two of the counts, he would be e the remaining three and presumably with a light sentence. The deal r Shahryar's full cooperation, which pears he did not give. The judge th missed the plea altogether. Shahryar sion runs sometimes parallel, som contrary to that of Hammer. It was stage that he fell out.

The sentence, delivered on M came as a rude surprise. Says Hamm was shocked at the length of the sente the fact that it ran consecutively, no currently. The judge has the power ev to reconsider the sentence and I th should. Shahryar does not deserv Apparently however, prosecuting att Neil Schneiderman is totally conv about the guilt of the defendant. He fel strongly about the case to make any fu comment.

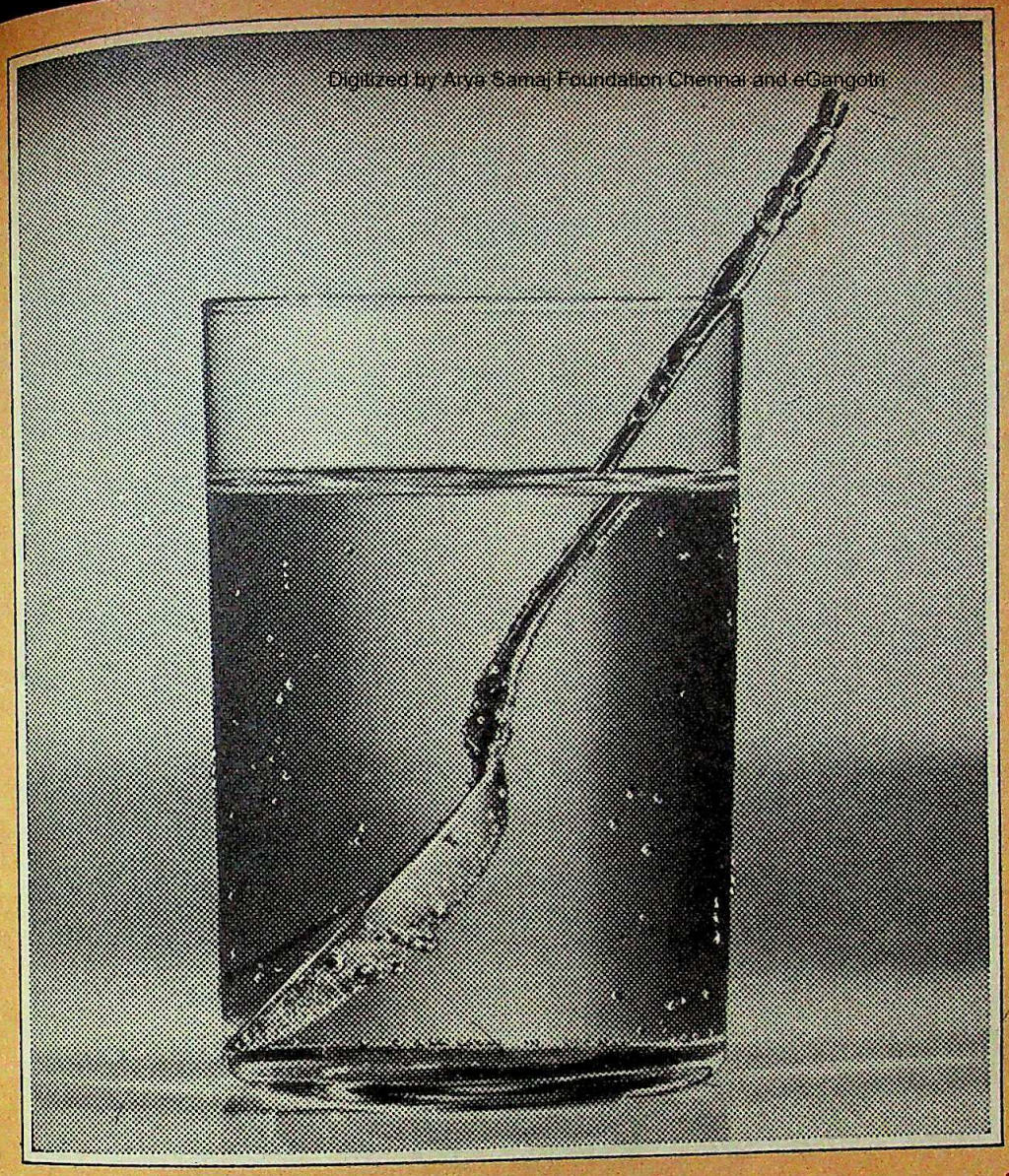
Meanwhile Shahryar, quite by co ence, has found a new Pakistani at called Shamim Mirza and Hammer is the picture. "It was a bitter swe perience," says Hammer. "To this da not believe Shahryar intended to d anyone, or harm the ship. And altho tried to harm my reputation, and was difficult client he is an intelligent man was a challenging case."

Shamim Mirza too, is sur Shahryar's innocence. Fed by Shah convincing manner, he believes th defence was inefficient and that He botched up the case. A verbose man, g dramatics, Mirza is impassioned b "travesty of justice" *vis-a-vis* Badshah" as he calls his client. He pro to leave no stone unturned in his c defence. It is his intention to file a application which if granted will Shahryar to be freed until the next he Mirza is determined to appeal to a court, the 11th circuit Federal Co Atlanta, if a motion for reconsidera the sentence is turned down. It will be 90 days before either appeal is consid

Till then, he is trying to pull powered political strings in India tervene on behalf of Shahryar. He has leaving messages at the offices of Gandhi and Narasimha Rao. It rema

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Very often, what you see does not have to be the way that you see it.

You do know that the spoon in the water is not really bent. It's just an illusion.

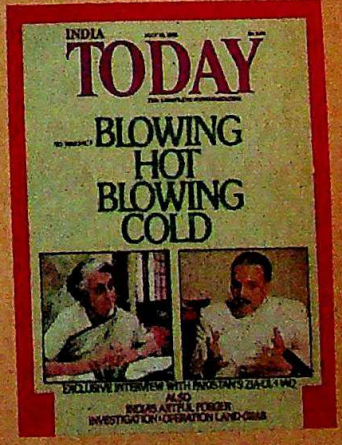
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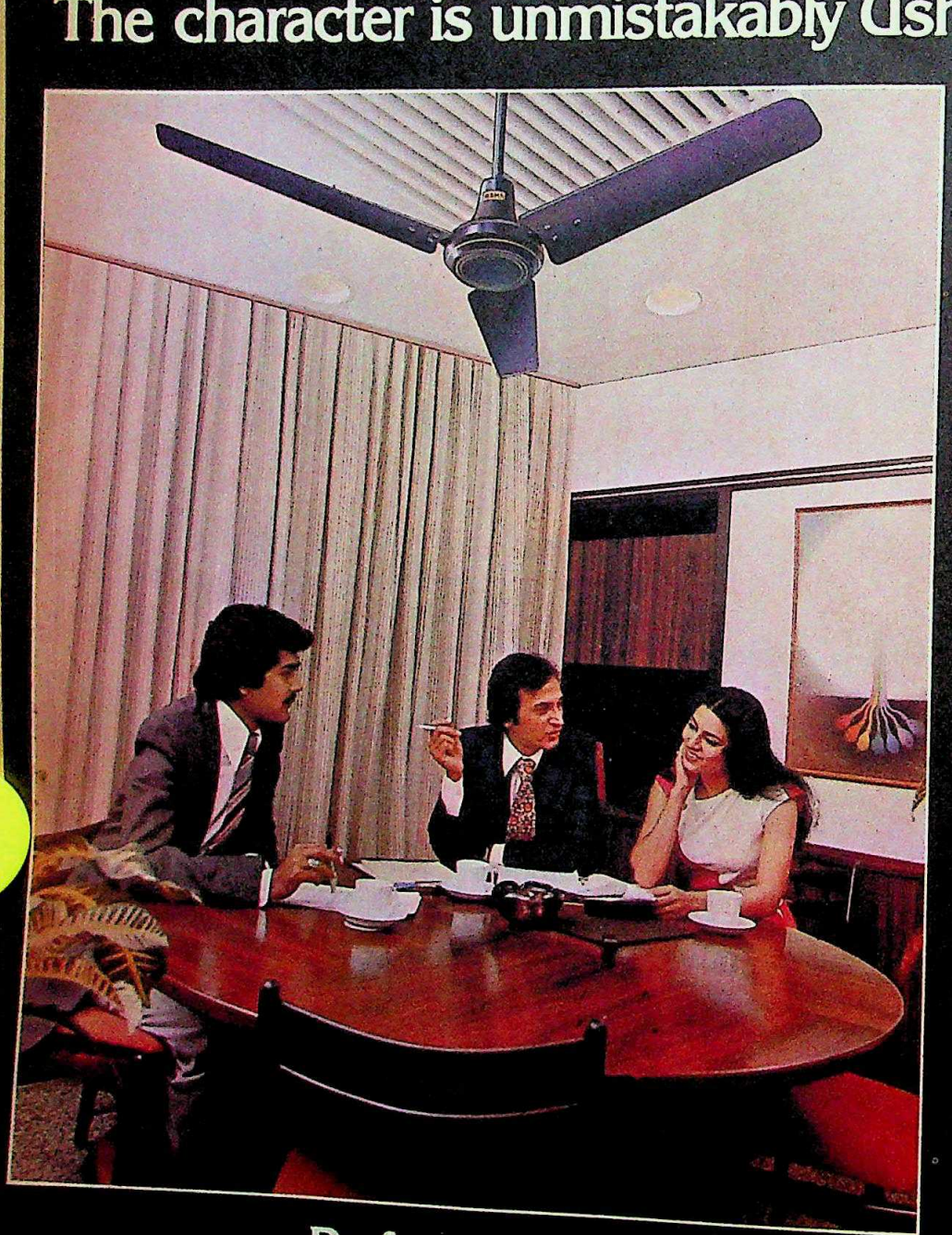
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The design is computer-aided.
The blade perfectly angled.
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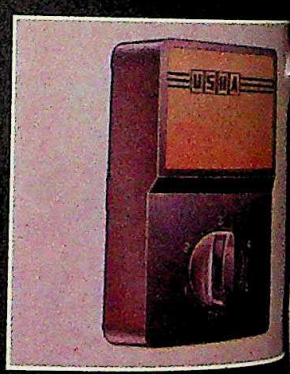
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The new Usha Senat

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Senator. Come, let's take close look at the ceiling that's the most advanced today.



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Performance

The aerodynamically designed blades are thicker—16 gauge, not the conventional 18. The higher blade angles lead to improved air displacement, more breeze covering a greater area. The special double ball bearings used in the Senator guarantee years of smooth, noiseless operation, without the need for regular oiling.

USH

Senat

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...ecay whether the Government will opt for ...embarrassment of involving itself in ...hryar's case, in spite of Yunus.

...Shahryar, trapped by what he refers to ...a "conspiracy of circumstances" is mak...the best of his situation at what he calls, ...his British accent, "the country club" jail. ...recounts nightmarish experiences at ano...jail where he spent four months without ...—contrary to the speedy trial act in the ...penal code—allegedly fending off attac...Says the University of Southampton ...nd) and University of California ...educated Shahryar, "It nearly drove ...insane." In fact, worried about his ir...tional behaviour Hammer had him exam...by a psychologist, as did the pro...ution. He was declared mentally fit on both occasions.

Currently he spends much time reading the Quran and other religious books. "We have an interesting bunch here," he says, "mafiosi, senators—I can make good contacts." He has lost neither his sense of humour nor his arrogance. Criticising the judiciary in general and his ex-attorneys in particular, he often refers to the "abortion of justice" he has experienced and the fact that he has been unable to exonerate himself. "I feel more hopeful now with Mirza fighting for me."

He is conscious of being an embarrassment to his family, with whom he has been in telephonic touch. "My mother is heartbroken and my father morose," he admits. However he has not lost hope of help from his father. "He has helped me on such occasions before," he lets slip. "But I have never done anything really illegal, though I don't wear a moral halo."

He comes through as a person who needs to be constantly on top of a situation. Hammer correctly sizes him up as a man used to getting his own way. Speaking to INDIA TODAY he expressed the hope that the article "would clear any misunderstanding about him". Unfortunately though, attempts to manipulate those around him, reminiscent of Sanjay Gandhi's clique to which he once belonged, seem to have backfired badly. As Hammer puts it, "He is in this position not so much because he did what he did but because of the way he handled the situation."

UK

Monsoon Melody

AS THE 1982 Festival Of India, in London moves towards the halfway mark, a new sound has emerged which may well epitomise the newly strengthened relations between Britain and India. It is the soothing strains of an Anglo-Asian pop group called *Monsoon*, the first band to put Indian music on to a a 12-inch discomix. The group made their debut, last year, at India's Independence Day celebrations in London, and were formally presented to the public this year at the newly-opened exhibition 'Britain and India' at the Commonwealth Institute. By March they were inching up the British pop charts determined to make it to the Top Ten, which they did.

Sheila Chandra, the shapely 17-year-old Indian girl, who provides the vocals for the group's hit-song *Ever so Lonely*, drapes herself in a clinging sari. While singing, her hands form the traditional Indian dance gestures, an unusual sight for Britain's pop music lovers. Exuding a rare kind of Indianness, Chandra, a product of an Indian father and a half-Indian and half-British mother, sports a sensuous tear-drop *bindi* and long snaky tresses tied in a guru knot to the left of her head.

Popular Blend: There is no doubt that her new kind of music has become very popular. Says the tall, charming Chandra about her music: "It's a blend of two cultures. It's a new sound. We are trying to draw the two cultures closer together and our blend provides a common denominator—with the dance beat there's something everyone can relate to."

Chandra, presently studying for her A-Levels, went to London's Italia Conti drama school at the age of 15 and studied dancing, acting and the compulsory lessons, which ironically led her to *Monsoon*. But Chandra's success does not entirely rest on her training. The man behind the group's spiral up the charts is dancing, acting and the compulsoty a large, cheerful Yorkshireman, Steve Coe, who discovered Chandra and is also producer and lyricist for the groupl



Sheila Chandra: popular blend of East and West

Coe stumbled into Indian music by chance. Said he: "I had an Indian girlfriend and we both used to listen to Hindi film songs on the car cassette radio. The old Mohammed Rafi numbers of the late '60s really fascinated me. I thought this is good. It's got style and it's experimental." Chance again took him to a recording studio where he heard a demo tape made by Chandra. "I was looking for something new and her voice attracted me," he recalls. The result was *Monsoon* comprising of five members, two of them Indian: Dari Mankoo, the sitarist and of course Chandra, the lead vocalist.

Monsoon make music reminiscent of the prelude to a 1950s' Bombay melody. The sound is recognisably pop but Coe's arrangement uses sitar, piano, guitar, tabla and percussion all synchronised with Chandra's slightly understated voice. The combination of voice and instrument taking forward a melody is new to western music Coe believes *Monsoon* could be a 'pivot group'. "It could turn people towards the East to find new sounds."

Meanwhile Chandra is convinced that success will not spoil her. Says she: "I think success has given me confidence but I don't think I have changed. I still live at home with my mother and father." She is still escorted to shows by her mother, who is also a singer. Chandra believes that *Monsoon* will have a wide appeal for both Western and Asian audiences. "I don't think we'll ever run out of ideas," said a confident Chandra.

—BONNY MUKHERJEE in London

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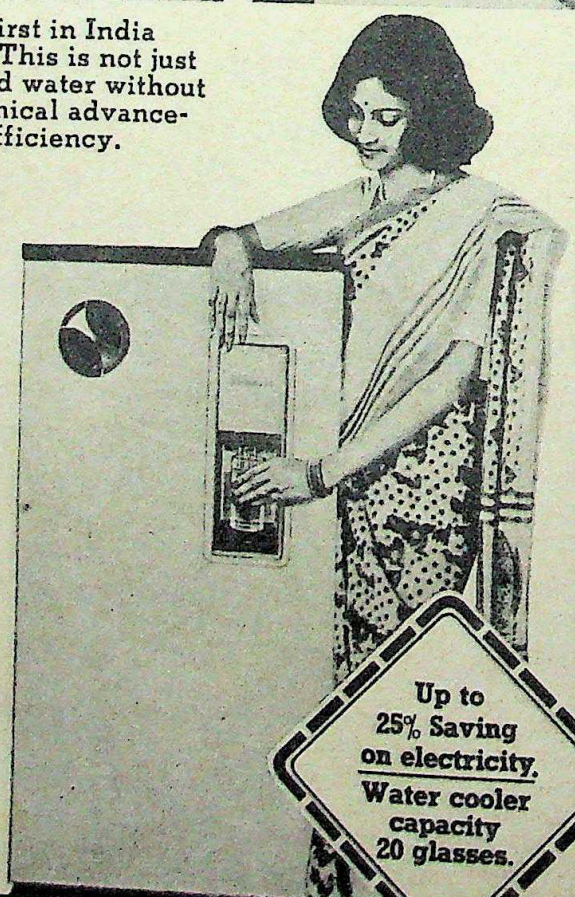
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A Diplomat's Death

AS ONE of the more popular members of New Delhi's diplomatic community and a key figure in the Kuwait embassy where he was first secretary, Mustafa Al Marzook's appointment book was usually full. But last fortnight, as he left his Gulmohar Enclave bungalow en route to the embassy, there was one unscheduled appointment he was destined to keep—with his assassin.

Stepping out of his house at 9.20 a.m. on June 3, Mustafa was opening the door to his Mercedes, when a figure materialised from behind the car and pumped five shots into the diplomat. One shot shattered the car window but the other four crashed into Mustafa's stomach. Mustafa's servant, who was polishing the car's bonnet heard the shots and saw his master collapse on the floor. But before he could shout for help, the assailant had sprinted out of the gate to a waiting car.

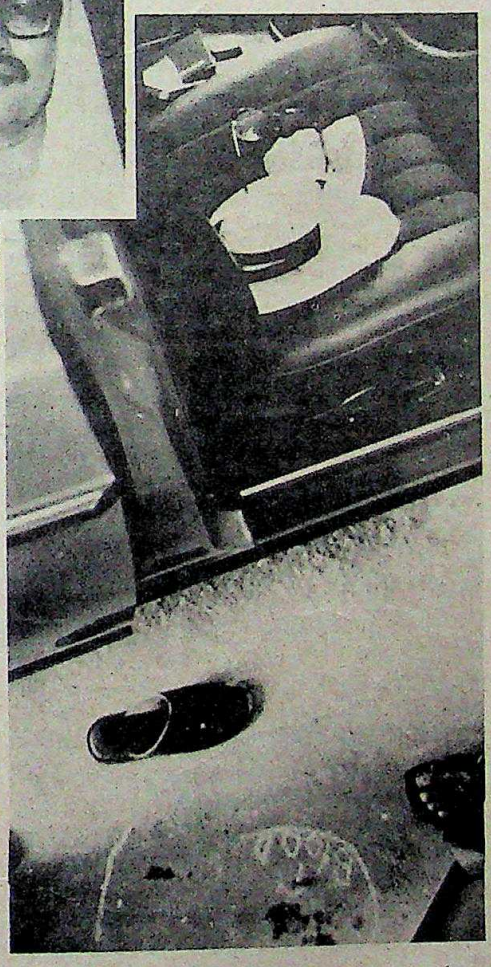
Sunder, a tea-stall owner whose shop was on the gunman's escape route, heard the shouts and tried to stop the assassin, but fell back hurriedly when the pistol was brandished menacingly at him. He did, however, see the assailant slip into the rear seat of the taxi where another man was seated before the vehicle sped away. By this time Mustafa's body was rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences where he was declared dead on arrival.

Baffling Slaying: The senseless killing sent immediate shock waves through the capital's diplomatic community. Not only was Mustafa a highly-respected diplomat and a man with a highly affable and friendly nature, it was also the first instance in New Delhi in which a diplomat had been gunned down in cold blood and with no apparent motive. One week later, the police were still baffled. Eye-witnesses supplied wildly different descriptions of the gunman and the assailant identity kit sketch shows a fair-complexioned, bearded man about six feet tall. The only reliable clue was that he was dressed in denim jeans, a light blue T-shirt and a blue golfing cap.

The taxi driver could only confirm that the two men who hired his taxi in South Extension, about 4 km from Mustafa's house, were foreigners who conversed in Arabic and occasionally, English. The taxi driver said he was told to wait near a departmental store about 100 yards from the diplomat's house. One passenger remained in the car while the other disappeared around the corner. Approximately half-an-hour later, the man came running back and ordered the driver to take them to Saket, less than a kilometre away. There, the two men released the cab outside another taxi stand.

Despite the massive manhunt that followed the assassin remained untraced. "We have made no progress so far in tracing the killer," admits Delhi's Deputy Commissioner of Police, Nikhil Kumar. "He obviously has no previous police or Interpol record. We are hoping for a breakthrough soon but it will really be a question of lucky breaks." A week later, the case took a dramatic turn when an obscure Arab group calling itself "The Arab Revolutionary Brigade Movement" based in Beirut claimed credit for the murder "in revenge for Palestinians being murdered in Kuwait". But the claim was not taken very seriously.





PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Mustafa (left) and the scene of the crime: senseless killing

No Enemies: The Kuwait Embassy in New Delhi was equally nonplussed as to the killer's motive or identity. "Mustafa was a well-liked man and as far as we know he had no enemies in India or outside. We have told the police all that we know and we have nothing more to add," was the brusque reply of an embassy spokesman.

Enquiries in Kuwait produced no further clues. In answer to INDIA TODAY's queries to the Foreign Office in Kuwait, a spokesman stated that Kuwait had no reason to take an official stand on the assassination since the Prime Minister of India, Mrs Gandhi, sent a personal message to the Emir of Kuwait that the investigating authorities would leave no stones unturned. The Kuwait Government has dispatched an inspector of the Kuwait police to work with the investigating officers in New Delhi. However, by last week, it was apparent that there were very few stones left for the investigating team to turn.

Close friends of the murdered diplomat and Aruna Nanda, a divorcée who has been living with him for the last 18 years along with her teenaged daughter, recall that Mustafa was a highly popular individual with a wide circle of friends, mainly Indians. In fact, Mustafa was a confirmed Indophile and had requested extension after extension to enable him to stay on in India. At social gatherings and in private, Mustafa and Aruna were like any other couple, very much in love and gracious hosts. In fact, it was obvious that Aruna was accepted by the Kuwait Embassy staff as she has often acted as hostess for the Kuwaiti ambassador's official and private parties. To close friends, Mustafa had often confided that he would marry Aruna without hesitation but was prevented from doing so by law which forbids a Kuwaiti from marrying a foreigner.

Aruna herself was shattered by the tragedy and in no condition to speak to the press. An official with Grindlay's Bank, she is an attractive, charming woman who had no hang-ups about her protracted relationship with Mustafa. For a while, the police examined the possiblity that the crime may have been connected in some way to Aruna's family, but discarded that theory since the family had long accepted the relationship and she was a mature woman with independent means. Similarly, the possibility that her daughter Seema, a student at Lady Shree Ram College, may have been involved somehow, was also dropped. With the police completely baffled and the embassy, friends and family none the wiser it appears that the murder will eventually wind up in the "Unsolved Crimes" file.

—DILIP BOBB with ANITA KAUL

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INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Caught In A Web



IN THE subcontinent, the wheels of amity grind but slowly. India and Pakistan fought four wars in 34 years; it is utopian to expect the conflicted twain to rush to the bucolic goal of treaty-bound peace. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took three months to reply to a cordial and constructive letter from President Zia-ul-Haq. Since there is no Indian ambassador in Islamabad, she sent her reply through K. Natwar Singh, secretary in the foreign office in charge of Pakistan, Afghan and Persian Gulf affairs. Singh was received by Zia with a warmth which belied impressions that the Pakastani leader had been stalling the process of negotiation between the two countries for a no-war treaty.

As he read Mrs Gandhi's letter, Zia beamed. The prime minister had taken a positive stand, and the communication breathed cordiality. Natwar Singh returned to New Delhi on the morning of June 2 with his portfolio bulging with goodwill. But the second round of negotiations between India and Pakistan is now to be held very soon. No date has been fixed. Early August, after Mrs Gandhi's return from Washington, is a safer guess than early July.

In the subcontinent, diplomacy is conducted with noisy silences. The noise is made by reporters; the silence is the property of governments. While in the United States, nothing remains secret in the world of foreign policy, in the subcontinent little is known until and unless officialdom pleases to share information with the public. The official "smokesman" of the foreign office artfully kept the contents of Mrs Gandhi's letter to Zia concealed from the people; enterprising reporters spun out yards of moonshine prose to hide the fact that they did not know what their prime minister had told the President of Pakistan. Still they almost unanimously announced that Mrs Gandhi—and India—had taken the "initiative" to break the logiam in the talks.

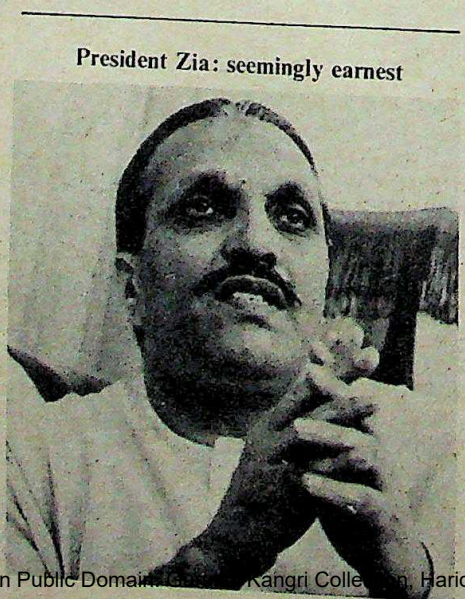
Equal Responsibility: The truth was different. In the current India-Pakistan diplomatic dialouge, neither party can be exclusively hailed for an initiative nor blamed for a deadlock. The two parties are equally responsible for both. If they seem to be taking two steps backward after one step forward, they are keeping in step with one another. In other words, the dialogue has now become a web. Neither Pakistan nor India can break loose from it. They can, and they will, stall. But it looks as if the two are at long last doomed to sign a no-war treaty before the end of 1982 and keep talking about a friendship pact.



Mrs Gandhi: treading carefully

In the current India-Pakistan diplomatic dialogue neither party can be exclusively hailed for an initiative nor blamed for a deadlock. The two parties are equally responsible for both

President Zia: seemingly earnest



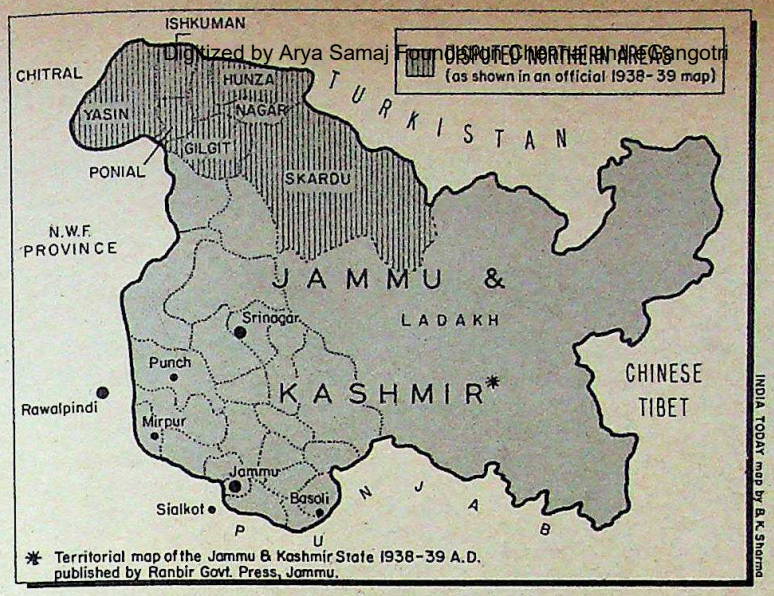
Before explaining why, it is necessary to listen to what [India] and Pakistan have been telling one another. On February [1], then Pakistani foreign minister, Agha Shahi, left Delhi at the [end] of his talks with the Indian Minister for External Affairs [P.V.] Narasimha Rao. Within a few hours of Shahi's departure, [Rao] reported to the Lok Sabha on the talks. "Mr Shahi's visit afforded the first opportunity to hold direct and in-depth discussions on the proposal for the conclusion of an agreement on non-aggression and non-use of force between India and Pakistan," Rao told an eager House. He disclosed that India had sent to Pakistan an *aide memoire* on the subject on December 24, 1981, and had received an *aide memoire* from Pakistan on January 12. He said that "after the discussions between the two sides, we are now in a position to undertake specific consideration of the elements which would constitute the substance of a no-war pact or an agreement on non-aggression and non-use of force." He announced that the second round of talks would take place in Islamabad at foreign secretary level in the first week of March.

On February 21, Zia wrote a warm and cordial letter to Indira Gandhi. He had received from Shahi a full report of the New Delhi talks and was particularly pleased to learn that "Madame Prime Minister" had bestowed upon the dialogue her personal blessing. Zia said that he was certain that the conclusion of a no-war pact between Pakistan and India would alter the strategic scenario in the entire region. He welcomed Mrs Gandhi's suggestion that the two countries set up a joint commission and described it as a positive step. He hoped that negotiations would proceed on the lines of the understanding reached between the foreign ministers as a result of their talks, and that the dialogue would not be interrupted by any external or internal circumstance. As evidence of his desire to improve India-Pakistan relations, Zia informed Mrs Gandhi that he had ordered that postal rates to India be cut by 15 per cent.

Friendship Treaty: Neither Zia in his letter nor Rao in his report to the Lok Sabha made any reference to a friendship treaty, for the simple reason that India did not formally offer a friendship treaty to Pakistan at any stage of the dialogue till the foreign minister's letter of May 31. The idea of a treaty of peace and friendship was thrown at Pakistani correspondents by Mrs Gandhi rather sportingly shortly before Shahi's departure from Delhi. If it were meant to be a formal proposal, Rao would have included it in his report to the Lok Sabha. The

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* Territorial map of the Jammu & Kashmir State 1938-39 A.D. published by Ranbir Govt. Press, Jammu.

that neither verbally nor in writing did India suggest a friendship treaty to Pakistan till the end of May.

Zia's letter to Mrs Gandhi was written three days after the exchanges between the Pakistani delegate, Agha Hilaly, and the Indian representative, B.R. Bhagat at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. The Jasnin report of the exchanges is now available at the Indian office in New Delhi. On February 25, Rao, responding to a call-attention question in the Lok Sabha, observed: "We have carefully studied Mr Agha Hilaly's statement. It is inconceivable that so senior and experienced a diplomat, who has served as his country's high commissioner in India, could have made such a statement without the prior approval of the Government of Pakistan, who could not have failed to anticipate the strong reaction in India."

The Indian Government therefore decided to postpone "for the time being" the foreign secretary's journey to Islamabad for the second round of talks. A protest was lodged with the Pakistani government. The fact that Zia's letter to Mrs Gandhi had followed Agha Hilaly's remarks in Geneva was either ignored or considered sufficient evidence of Pakistan's sincerity and goodwill. The possibility that the Pakistani and Indian delegates to the Human Rights Commission had unwittingly provoked one another to fight a verbal duel over Kashmir, and that both spoke mainly with the home audiences in mind was apparently dismissed when the Indian government interpreted the Hilaly statement and put the dialogue in the freezer.

Diversionary Moves: As both sides blamed each other for stalling, each expressed hope that the dialogue would be resumed soon. There was no lack of diversionary moves on either side. Zia omitted three territories in the Jammu and Kashmir region, Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu, whose legal status is in dispute, to send "observers" to the hand-picked Majlis-i-Shoora. India lodged a symbolic protest, wondering, at the same time, if the President was not moving in his own way towards accepting the prevailing political and military realities in Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's new Foreign Minister, Shahabzada Yaqub Khan, who seems to be more confident than his predecessor of his grip on Islamabad's external policy, chose Beijing to be the capital of his first trip abroad after assuming office. There, conversations between Khan and the Chinese leaders produced a marked Sino-Pakistani approach towards improving ties with India: a cautious, step-by-step movement towards amity without abandoning established policies or values, but ready to pursue give-and-take talks. Mrs Gandhi, on her own part, went to Saudi Arabia with a view to conquering the minds and purses of the oil-rich princes. She told them that India had offered a treaty of peace and friendship to Pakistan, and got this written into the joint communiqué issued at the end of her visit.

The prime minister's diplomatic offensive wrested from the President Khan the first authoritative Pakistani statement on the concept of a friendship treaty. "We feel convinced," said he on May 15, "that the interest of both countries will be served by the early conclusion of the proposed non-aggression pact. The requisite ground for the promotion of mutual friendship and cooperation can be effectively prepared through this approach."

Principal Objective: Khan added,: "The idea of a treaty of peace and friendship was mentioned by the Indian prime minister to Pakistani journalists in the course of a discussion on the nature and scope of the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971. However, the matter was not pursued as it was realised that such a treaty was premature. The principal objective of the non-aggression pact was to create the necessary atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence in the context of which alone could such a treaty acquire relevance." He implied that a no-war pact and the joint commission (about which he said there was "no element of doubt or ambiguity") would help create the kind of strategic harmony on which alone could a treaty of friendship and cooperation be mounted.

Mrs Gandhi in her letter to Zia has (according to reliable sources) made six points. First, she repeated her assurance that India regarded a stable and prosperous Pakistan highly and would never attack the neighbouring country. Secondly, India, she said, would be ready to resume negotiations for a no-war or non-aggression treaty as soon as arrangements could be mutually agreed upon for the next round in Islamabad. Thirdly, the next round should aim at finding common ground between Indian and Pakistani concepts of a non-aggression treaty.

Fourthly, as negotiations proceeded, the two countries should agree to set up the joint commission but it should not be made conditional on the no-war pact. Fifthly, her offer of a friendship and cooperation treaty stood and this was what the two countries must aim at as soon as the necessary ambience had been created. And, finally, both countries must strictly adhere to the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement and refrain from doing or saying anything that might be construed as offensive to that accord. Mrs Gandhi's letter was couched in friendly and polite language, of course; she defended the postponement of the second round as a result of Hilaly's references to Kashmir in Geneva.

Motivation: The question that was asked avidly in New Delhi's diplomatic community was: what exactly motivated Mrs Gandhi's letter to Zia? Various answers were suggested. Some argued that having committed herself to the Saudi princes that India would pursue the quest for amity with Pakistan, the prime minister had to lift the embargo and get the dialogue going again. Others believed that the letter to Zia was part of Mrs Gandhi's environment-building for her trip to Washington.

She must also have had in her mind the major shift in the balance of power in south-west Asia that will follow a decisive Iranian victory in the 20-month-old war with Iraq and a probable regime change in Baghdad. Both India and Pakistan have been backing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which is strongly opposed by Iran with the support of the "steadfast group" of Arab nations—Syria, Libya, Algeria, Yemen and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

This confrontation has suddenly gifted Moscow its moment in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf sheikdoms are seeking Soviet help to bring the war to an end. A Soviet "Tashkent" in the Persian Gulf will have a profound impact on the balance of power in south and south-west Asia. It seems that both Mrs Gandhi and Zia realise that this is the time to bridge the India-Pakistan strategic divide that has enabled external powers to intervene in the subcontinent's affairs.

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7 soaring flyovers take shap... which traffic will flow smooth...

Report on Asia's greatest spectacle of sport...

The 7 soaring flyovers added to Delhi's traffic circulation system shall be the bridges connecting the islands of sport—the stadia—during the Asiad. These, and the 47 roads and intersections now being widened and relaid.

Thousands of sportsmen and lakhs of spectators will find the resulting traffic flow smooth, tension-free—allowing them to commute at ease between the 17 stadia where the Asiad will be contested.

Twice as much traffic—yet a smoother flow.

During the Asian Games, Delhi will witness twice as much as normal peak hour traffic, particularly on the north-south axis along Delhi's eastern stretch where most of the games sites lie. That's why as many as 5 flyovers are coming up on or close to Ring Road, Mathura Road and Lala Lajpat Rai Marg, while many feeder roads are being widened and intersections redesigned. At other points too, where the traffic flow is heavy, the system is being revamped.

Besides work on roads, an electrified ring railway system is coming up. Once every 15 minutes during peak hours, trains will run between 19 stations. Their movement will be coordinated with bus services to the various stadia, thus achieving an integration of road and rail traffic.

Scientifically evolved plan.

This plan for the revamping of Delhi's traffic system comes from a thorough scientific study of traffic patterns by NATPAC, a committee of traffic experts. Based upon observed Passenger Car Unit (PCU) counts along all major roads, and projected traffic volumes, this plan identified the vital roads to be improved, and suggested the improvements.

The result: no clogging of traffic even in peak hours during the Asian Games and later. And a boost to Delhi's beautification drive. Three if not more trees are being planted to replace every single tree removed in the process of this revamping, giving Delhi many more tree-lined avenues than ever before.

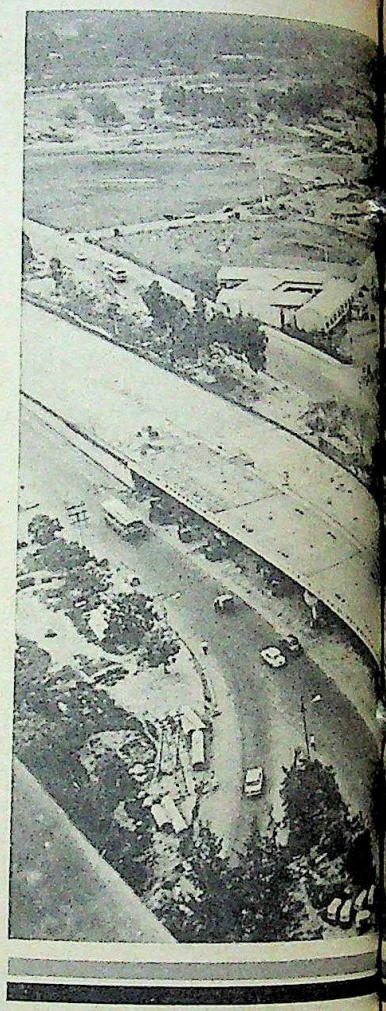
Paying for itself—and giving still more.

The smoother flow of traffic will more than pay for the cost of traffic system revamping. The shorter waiting time for motor traffic will ensure petrol and time saving, and reduce smoke pollution, thus giving both money and health benefits to commuters. For instance, the fuel saving at the flyover crossings alone would more than pay for the cost of the flyovers in less than 4 years.

Work moves quickly towards completion—6 of the flyovers will be commissioned by June, and the 7th by September.

A remarkable facility for Delhi.

The improvement of the traffic system is part of a meticulously coordinated activity involving hundreds of specialist agencies. Even after the Asiad has come and gone, the new traffic system will stay, a magnificient new facility for Delhi.



An honour to India.

Architects, planners, engineers, workers and sports lovers are busy preparing for the biggest Asiad ever. The challenge is exciting, the rewards plentiful. Hosting it will indeed be a great honour for India.

The Asiad. The largest spectacle of sport in Asia. Eagerly awaited, keenly contested, once every 4 years.

The Asiad is coming, and we are getting ready.



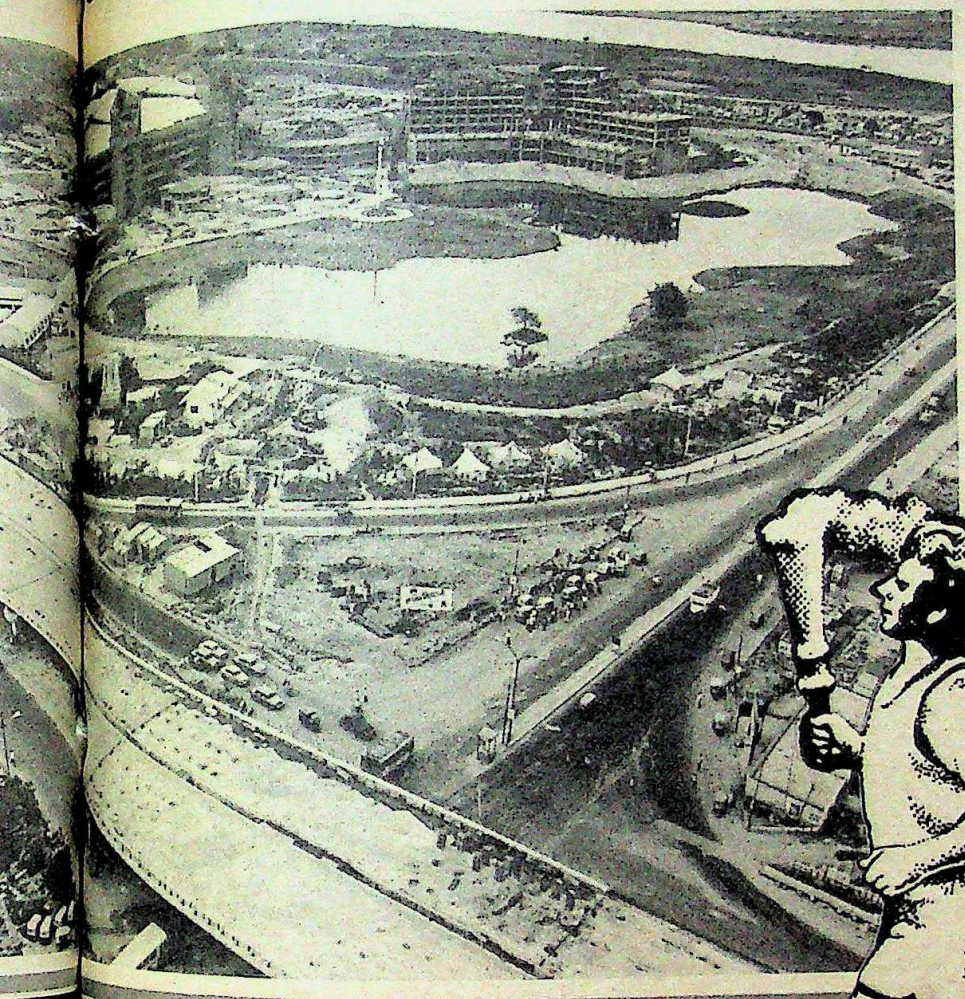
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ital lifelines along
etween 17 arenas of sport.



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IX ASIAN GAMES
DELHI 1982



IX ASIAD DELHI 1982

November 19 – December 4

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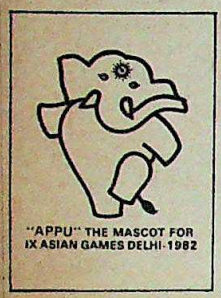
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ASIAD '82

RACE AGAINST TIME



"APPU" THE MASCOT FOR IX ASIAN GAMES DELHI-1982

THE countdown has begun. In exactly five months from now the curtain will go up on what is easily the most ambitious project India has undertaken in recent years—the IX Asiad. On November 19, which also conveniently happens to be Mrs Gandhi's 65th birthday, 5,000 athletes from 32 countries representing the cream of Asian sport will assemble in New Delhi to battle for a total of 580 medals over the next 15 days.

For the athletes, it will be a culmination of four years of blood, sweat and tears. Their triumphs and tragedies will be part of sporting history, half-buried in the mass of dry statistics. But the statistics will fail to reveal the real triumph of Asiad'82—the incredible saga of how the New Delhi Games became a reality. The real heroes of the Games will not be the lithe, finely-honed athletes but the faceless men who made the Asiad dream come alive.

Stripped of the controversies that have dogged the frenetic scramble to physically make the Asiad a possibility; the political snakes and ladders that has taken place; the strident outcry of the environmentalists and the inevitable allegations of rake-offs, the Asiad project is undeniably a triumph of India's technical and professional ability. It has been an Olympian race against time: a mere 20 months to erect five brand new, complex and state-of-the-art stadia and renovate and expand 12 more existing ones, apart from the other accompanying arrangements that entail the hosting of an international sporting meet of the magnitude of the Asiad. "It is the largest and most complex management exercise the country has undertaken so far," boasts S. S. Gill, the stern-visaged secretary-general of the Special Organising Committee (SOC) for the Asian Games and a senior IAS officer.

Awesome Task: Even viewed statistically, the totality of material that has gone into the making of Asiad '82 indicates the awesomeness of the task. Just the stadia alone have accounted for over 8 crore bricks, 00,000 tonnes of cement, 90,000 tonnes of steel and over 300 kilometres of cables and wires. Put end to end, the number of bricks alone would girdle the globe. The amount of cement and steel would be enough to erect a new township or build a dozen bridges. And that is segregated from the other beaver-like building activity that has disrupted normal traffic flow in the capital for the last two years and is undoubtedly very much a part of the Asiad project. This includes no less than seven flyovers, widening of 30-odd roads and 10 new five-star hotel projects, in itself a mammoth undertaking which has in one stroke changed forever the face of Delhi.

By last fortnight, the biggest question mark that loomed over the Asiad project—the question of it being ready in time for the Games—had almost been obliterated. A majority of the stadia have long since lost their skeletal shape and are rapidly nearing completion. Last fortnight, the first of the flyovers was commissioned and an official D-day for the last of the project has been slated for September 1. Apart from the hotels, of which only two or possibly three will beat the deadline, Asiad '82 will be *Go* by that date if the current momentum continues.

That, of course, will be the triumph. The tragedy is that the frantic and unrelenting round the clock pace at which the project has been operating was totally unnecessary. The vote to give New Delhi the Games was decided in Montreal as far back as 1976. Yet actual work on the project started in earnest only in 1981. In between was a succession of disasters, all of them man-made and politically motivated, that seriously threatened to jeopardise the Games even before the first brick had been laid. India's hesitant bid to host the Games predictably ran into a strong political headwind. Initially, it was brushed under the carpet amid the urgency of the 1977 general elections.

Then came its biggest hurdle in the form of the Janata government which dithered over the issue of whether to hold the Games or back out. Typically, no decision was taken except the formation of an inevitable steering commitee under Vijay Kumar Malhotra. By the time the Janata government had dug its own grave in 1979, Asiad '82 consisted of a handful of dusty and dogeared files. But bigger threats loomed ahead. Charan Singh, heading a shaky caretaker government at the Centre, dismissed the Asiad as a "costly tamasha" and one the country could ill afford.

Controversy: Meanwhile, the Asiad was embroiled in an unprecedented controversy over whether it should be held in Delhi or neighbouring Haryana, where Chief Minister Bhajan Lal was making a desperate bid for its staging for reasons that again had very little to do with sport. Fortuitously, Asiad, while the Cabinet was debating Charan Singh's directive to renege on hosting the Games, his government collapsed. The suspense, however, was only over in mid-January 1980, when Mrs Gandhi gave the Games the go-ahead at the first Cabinet meeting held by the new Congress(I) Government.

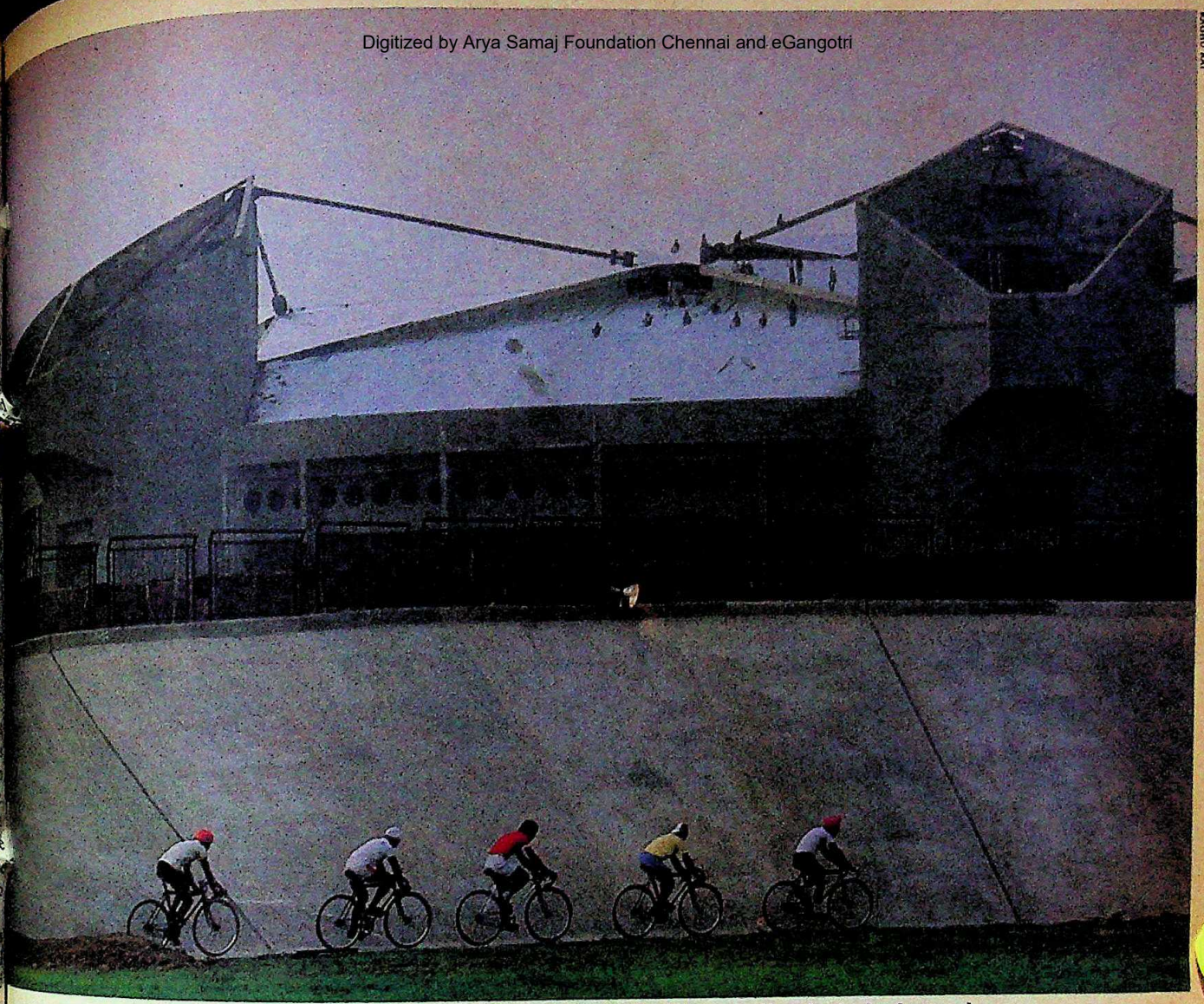
Political delays, however, continued to dog the Games with the unsavoury dismissal of Malhotra as chairman of the Organising Committee and his replacement by V.C. Shukla, the then civil supplies minister. But once Shukla fell out of favour and was dropped from the Cabinet, his ouster from the Asian Games was only a matter of time. By the time the axe actually fell and Buta Singh, the vice-chairman of the committee and, ironically, Shukla's replacement in the Civil Supplies Ministry, was elevated to chairman, 1980 was well on its way.

But with Mrs Gandhi's official blessings and the fact that son Rajiv and his personal kitchen cabinet were later actively involved in the Games, the Asiad nightmare gradually faded and the uncertainty gave way to increasing optimism. In late December 1980, Gill was appointed secretary-general of the SOC and a hand-picked team was selected with the help of Raja Bhalindra Singh, president, Asian Games Federation and president, Indian Olympic Association (IOA). Though packed with politicians, the 28 committees set up under the SOC to handle various aspects of the Games contained enough talent in the form of technocrats, senior service officers and bureaucrats to ensure that once established, the pace could be maintained.

Costly Blunders: The delays and the drastically shortened time-span had, however, taken their toll. The original estimate of Rs 61 crore as the price-tag for staging the Games was soon made a mockery of by escalation, deliberate delays by contractors, some costly blunders and unforeseen expenses as a result of sheer inexperience (see *box*). In fact, it is the spiralling cost of holding the Games that has given its detractors the most ammunition and labelled it in many quarters as an unaffordable extravagance. Appu, the prancing elephant, the

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RAGHU RAI

Indian cycling hopes practising in the velodrome with the indoor stadium in the background

Asiad's mascot, has also become a sym-
of the white elephant that many people
ve the Games will be as far as the
ury is concerned.

In fact, the myriad related controversies
e have accompanied the preparations for
ad have largely paled before the main
ntroversy regarding its actual cost. There
e alarming variations between the figures
have been given out in Parliament, the
ures given by the soc and the costs com-
ted by people actually working on the
d sites. Parliament, for instance, has
en repeatedly informed that the cost of
ing the Games will work out to a mere
91 crore. That, however, is the original
mate and bears not the slightest relation
the final total, which, if one includes the
ated activities—seven flyovers, widening
30-odd roads, construction of 10 hotels,
rification of the ring railway—works
to over Rs 470 crore which is con-
ably less than the Rs 700 crore that is
g bandied about but also infinitely hig-
than the official figures being handed out.

OFFICIALS of the soc conveniently delink their expenses to that incurred on the flyovers and hotels with the excuse that "these are all part of the metro's normal requirements". But there is no question that it is only because of the Asiad that they are being built now. The controversial School Lane flyover, for instance, was mooted as far back as 1962—20 years ago. But even accepting the soc's argument, their figures are definitely being underplayed. Their claim is that they have spent Rs 49 crore as capital cost on construction of the stadia with a 15-20 per cent escalation cost. Yet, according to engineers on site, the cost of the village alone will work out to over Rs 35 crore while the Indoor Stadium, the largest in Asia and the third largest in the world, will cost close to Rs 40 crore.

The soc's total figure, which includes administrative expenses such as equipment, transport and furnishings estimated at Rs 18 crore, works out to Rs 77 crore. Again, according to official estimates, the revised cost of the stadia alone totals slightly over Rs 100 crore and with the cost of the expensive equipment imported for the Games, the actual total is nearer to Rs 150 crore. Seven flyovers and road widening activities have cost around Rs 35 crore while the 10 hotel projects together come to around Rs 280 crore. A fairly conservative estimate of the cost of the Games then is close to Rs 465 crore.

The irony, however, lies in the fact that even that figure is hardly an over-indulgence for something as mammoth and prestigious as the Asiad. Just one modern fertiliser project would cost more, and the Asiad is certainly destined to boost India's international stature considerably after the Games. Says soc Chairman Buta Singh: "The Asian Games will put us firmly on the world sporting map. Once we have staged the Asiad successfully, India will have a much larger say in international decisions concerning sports. Many people don't realise that with this, the number of votes India has in international federations are almost doubled. Apart from that, India is a major Asian

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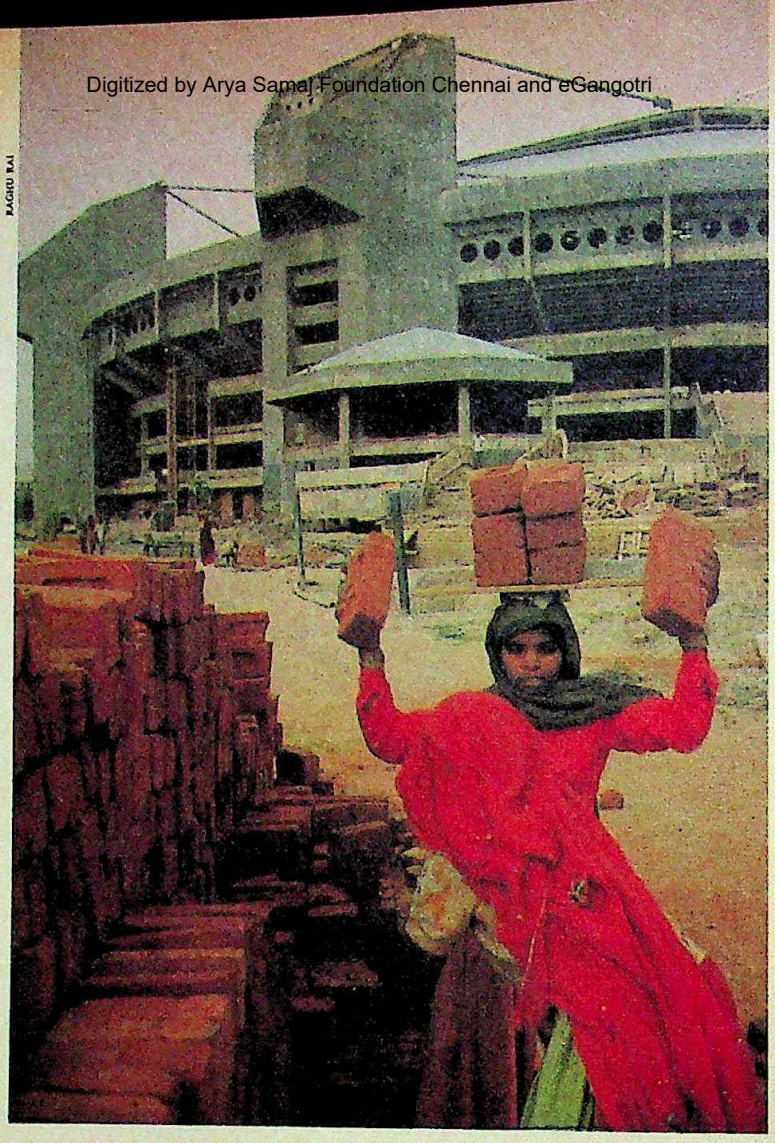
power in everything except sport. We wanted to catch up and this was the best time. The very fact that we are staging the Games increases our status considerably."

Advantages: IOA President Raja Bhalindra Singh, a keen sportsman and the guiding spirit behind the Games, takes a longer and broader view. "I see it as a tremendous incentive for the youth of the country. For the first time, they have equipment and facilities that are the best available. Above all, it will channelise their energies into something worthwhile." To illustrate this, he quotes the example of Thailand which was racked with serious student violence in the early '60s. But once Bangkok established itself as an international sports centre (it has staged three Asiads since then), Thailand's students have had more productive channels for their energies. On another plane, Japan is a classic example of the advantages that accrue from becoming an international sports centre. Before the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Japan was at the bottom of the sporting ladder. Since then, Japanese athletes have challenged the best in the world and have increased their medal tally, quite literally, by leaps and bounds.

But even if the Games turn out to be an unqualified success, the question of whether they were necessary or not will continue to simmer. Arguably, the Rs 470 crore which the Games will cost, and that is a highly conservative estimate, is Rs 200 crore more than the total investment in village and small industries for the 1981–82 Plan allocations. If invested in small industries, it could have provided employment for over two million people. But that is largely an academic exercise, which always comes back to the crucial point—if India wants to play in the Big League and wants the facilities to do so, the cost factor is justified. If, however, the facilities are left to rot after the Games and the staging of Asiad '82 is only an ego trip for a handful of people , the cost would be far too heavy a price to pay. But only the future will really tell.

In that context, the New Delhi Asiad is clearly a major investment for the future.

RAGHU RAI



Woman worker at the indoor stadium: racing against time

Till now, India's decline in the sporting arena and the monotonous string of failures has been conveniently disguised under the all-embracing heading of "lack of proper equipment" whether it was astroturf for the hockey players, synthetic tracks for athletes, fibreglass poles for pole-vaulters, et al. With the Asiad having ushered in the modern sporting age in India, that catch-all no longer applies and if Indian sportsmen continue to lag, it will be for other reasons.

Pride: Nobody can doubt that Asiad '82 is a sports-lovers' dream come true. The stadia and the equipment are undeniably world-class. The fact that they have been completed in record time is a matter of statistical record. What is clearly a matter of national pride is the fact that the stadia are state-of-the-art affairs designed and built by men who had no experience in the field at all.

The *pièce de résistance* of the Games is the Indoor Stadium inside the Indraprastha sports complex which sprawls over 110 acres of land on the banks of the Yamuna. Viewed from the air, the Indoor Stadium looks like something out of *Star W* a futuristic space station overshadows everything for miles around. Assigned the Delhi Develop Authority (DDA) which far has confined itself battalions of box houses, the Indoor Stad is an architectural ma The stadium has a dia of 150 metres and is a like structure suppor eight pylons. The com ty of the design required import of an internati expert on stress analys space structures—Profe Z.S. Makowski. Mako admitted that the Ind Stadium was "one of most interesting structu he had been associated The stadium, which is trally air-conditioned, be the venue of the gym tics, badminton and vo ball events during the A and has a capacity of 25 It will also have a so proofed, collapsible pa tion which can divide stadium into two halve simultaneous events.

In the office of the project engineer for the dium, V.P. Chetal, is a b giving the day's Above that is a sign says "Countdown 65", an ever-cons reminder that there are 65 days left to ge complex ready for handing over to Asiad. "It is the biggest project I have worked on," says Chetal, "there are separate agencies involved in one way another; 7,000 labourers working in shifts round the clock and over 50 engin and architects." The main architect, Sh Dass, who designed Mrs Gan farmhouse, admits that he will prob wind up losing money on the project bu reputation will more than compensate the loss. For DDA Vice-Chairman, Ailawadi, there is a similar benefit. "I redeemed our reputation," he says.

Real Heroes: It is Ailawadi and handful of others who are the real hero the Asiad and not the fat cats who cornering all the glory. Chetal, the engineer of the Indoor Stadium, is a mo self-effacing man who insists that the c should be jointly shared. But obviously his dynamism and 18-hour-a day-seven-a-week efforts and his rapport with the architect, Sharat Dass, a short,

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spectacled individual, which have made stadium into a top-of-the-line product. Chetal's office is an island of quiet efficiency within the helter-skelter of the building of pile-drivers and the hammering walls. Maps, charts and progress reports plastered all over the walls and walkie-talkie sets keep him in constant touch with key men on the project site. "I think our main achievement is the constant minute by minute monitoring which has enabled us to be on top of the work," he says. Chetal also adds that his bosses in the DDA have backed him all the way. DDA Vice-Chairman Tyagi, for instance, gave Chetal the go-ahead to start the pile-driving work even before the project budget had been officially sanctioned, thus giving them at least two months of lead time. Says Dass: "It is a unique project and that is why I think everybody pitched in and worked like madmen. The sense of satisfaction in seeing something like this take shape before your eyes is something incredible."





Chetal (left) and Dass: unique project

Wonders: Ironically enough, the Asiad has been an inadvertent advertisement for the DDA with its engineers having surpassed themselves like never before. R.S. Jindal, the chief project engineer of the Village project, is another overly-modest individual but one who has achieved wonders. A short, plump, clean-shaven man with no airs about him, Jindal has, however, been responsible for a Village that is as good as anything that Bangkok or Tokyo can provide. Though it is likely that some of the 853 houses may not be ready in time, the ones that will are tastefully designed and well-constructed with the interior designing in traditional Indian motifs. DDA will, of course, get three times the amount they have spent when the houses are sold after the Games but for once the scramble for the houses will be justified. "I think we have proved that a combination of determination and hard work is all that is required," says Jindal.

The main stadium has its own heroes in the form of the four-man team that, sans experience, drew up the design and plans in the record time of one month. Originally, the main stadium was meant to be sited in the National Stadium at the end of Delhi's central vista that stretches from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate. Only after work had started did it dawn on the organisers that the stadium with its lighting towers would ruin the central vista concept laid down by Lutyens. "By the time the new Lodhi Road

The main stadium on Lodhi Road: producing its own heroes



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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SPORTS

Sweating It Out

"I WANT movement! Don't walk as if you're going to a marriage! Okay, let's try again." G. Gopichand, volleyball coach at the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NIS), Patiala, is putting his female charges through their daily evening two-hour work-out on a court tucked away to one side of the extensive grounds of the red, white and cream Motibagh Palace. Once the home of the maharaja of Patiala, the stately building and its 250 acres today house India's premier sports institution, founded in 1961 with the primary objective of of producing sports coaches of "high calibre".

Twenty-one years later, the NIS faces its greatest test—the IX Asian Games to be held 260 km away in Delhi will show if the NIS and its coaches have toiled hard enough to put India on the sports map. The Asiad has galvanised the institute to no small extent—equipment worth over Rs 40 lakh has been imported for the coaching camps in Patiala and elsewhere, no less than 11 coaches have been invited from the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the USSR, Bulgaria and North Korea to whip Indian players into medal-winning shape and, by the end of June, 180 camps will have been held in the Asiad's 21 disciplines, ranging from athletics (16 camps) to rowing (three camps).

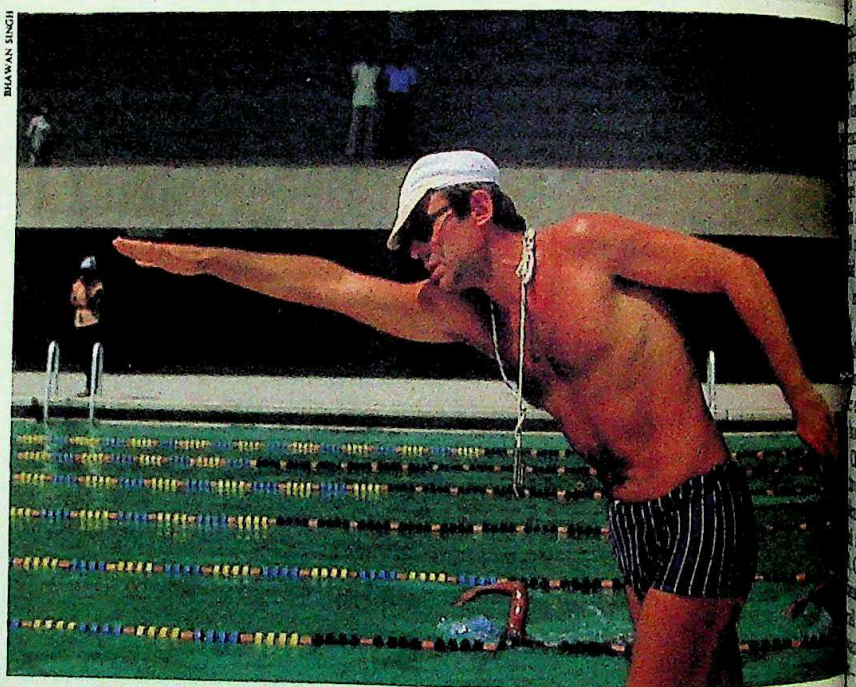
Prestige Games: The battle for the gold—or the silver, or the bronze—will be won—or lost—on the NIS's playing fields and at those of the other centres around the country. The words heard most often at the Motibagh Palace are "hope" and "promising". "The coaches are of the opinion that our performance will be better than the previous one," asserts Deputy Director Gurbux Singh cautionsly. "Some prestige is involved. After all, we are the hosts."

Retaining that prestige is hard work. The players begin their day at six in the morning, and carry on with practice until eight, when they break for breakfast. The players relax with other games—the wrestlers, for instance, splash about in the pool. Evening tea over, it's back to work-outs at five in the evening and this goes on until seven. It is not possible to practise after eight in the morning because the sun and the heat are too much, except for the swimmers.

All this is done on the 5,000 to 6,000 calories that are fed to the players every day in the form of badams, meat, cheese and "fresh salad with half lemon". Rs 26 worth of food is consumed by each player every day, and by and large the players are quite satisfied although there were some complaints such as "too oily". Some of the wrestlers, especially the ones in the heavier weight category, feel that the food is not enough, even though they are entitled to 100 gm extra meat or cheese preparation at meals.

Imported Equipment: What has really won the hearts of the players is the equipment. Says gymnast Sandhya: "There has been a lot of improvement." The coaching camps are serviced by international standard equipment, almost all of it imported, ranging from the famous astroturf to a complete array of bars and horses for the modern gymnasium-cum-swimming pool com plex. Badminton players use Garuda shuttlecocks from Indonesia, table-tennis players Nittaku balls from Japan, and volleyballs, footballs and basketballs are by Mikasa, Japan. In their effort to put everything to use, a hockey field has even been constructed using bits and pieces of spare astroturf.

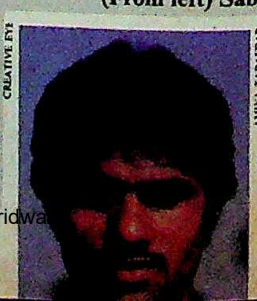
All the activity is not, of course, concentrated on the fields and the buildings that the former maharaja gifted away to Indian sport. The second centre for the coaching camps is Bangalore, where the south centre of the NIS was established in 1975. Other coaching centres include Bombay (yachting) and Delhi (equestrian events). In June, for instance, 18 camps will have been held with only eight of these in Patiala. Others include badminton (Panjim, Goa), and cycling (Dagshai, Simla hills)


BHAWAN SINGH

East German coach B. Johanke directs his charges: improved facilities

since training began in December 1980. The foreign coaches are listened to more than the Indians, but sometimes their rigid professionalism is given the go-by. Wrestling coach M.M. Zenin of the USSR insists on a post-practice drink of glucose; the water must be boiled, then cooled. However, a few wrestlers used to less finicky Indians, reportedly gulp down water from garden hoses while Zenin rushes off to get his strainer.

(From left) Sabir Ali, Angel Mary,


CREATIVE EYE


AMIYA TARAPDAR

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The point of the exercise is ... At the first games hosted ... India in New Delhi in 1951, ... won 16 gold medals (total tally: ... in six disciplines with 11 countries ... competing. At Bangkok, Thailand, in ... India won 11 golds for a total tally ... in 19 disciplines with 25 countries ... competing. It is obvious that India's ... of the gold and the glory has ... passed. Athletics brought eight of ... 11 golds at Bangkok; by all ... athletics is going to bring in ... India's golds in November 1982. ... fact, the Indian bandwagon can ... keep pace with the Japanese, the ... and the Korean juggernauts in ... two disciplines—athletics and ... The athletic hopefuls include ... runners Gopal Saini, Shivnath ... and Hari Chand, decathlete Sabir ... sprinters Adile Sumariwala and ... Chandran; of the women, long ... Mercy Mathew, heptathlete ... Mary Joseph and sprinter P.T. ... likely to do well. Geeta Zutshi ... is training hard to retain her ... gold.

... wrestling India will have to fall ... old stalwarts Satpal and ... Singh, supported by Ashok ... Mahavir and Kartar Singh. ... events which could bring in medals ... and swimming.

Challenge: Indian athletes will have ... off an increasingly belligerent ... from China. At the last Asian ... and Field meet in Tokyo in June ... Chinese women athletes displaced ... from the second position in the ... medals tally. In fact, 1981 was ... shed year for Asian Ath- ... according to former Olympian ... Bhatia, a number of Asians ... in top positions in international ... and at least six of the top 20 ... were Asian.

... increasingly competitive Asians, ... have to run just to stay in place. ... their effusions of confidence in ... sports officials pour liberal doses of ... in private. Said Gurbux Singh: ... so easy. People expect too ... Adds a coach: "Take volleyball. ... we win when world-beaters like ... and the Chinese are coming? ... speaks of their supremacy:

their teams' average height is 1.78 m, ours is 1.67 m. Besides which, they plan four years early."

Planning is the key to success in the ruthless world of modern sport, as the foreign coaches never fail to point out. Gymnastics coach Dieter Strucks of the GDR watched top-heavy 18 and 20-year-olds walking unsteadily on the beam and said: "In our country we start at five or six years. The mind is most receptive when the child is 10 years old. You must create performance tracks in the brain so that success becomes the end-product of ordered thought. Here, the girls come to gymnastics when they are 10 and I spend most of my time pushing incorrect techniques out of their minds."

The Indian coaches are slightly nettled by the attention their foreign counterparts get. Said one: "The foreigners are listened to only because they are foreigners. Otherwise there is nothing spectacular in what they do. We give the same training." Sometimes there is a communication gap: Erdyniev, archery coach from the USSR, instructs his wards with grunts and pidgin English and his wife often translates for him.

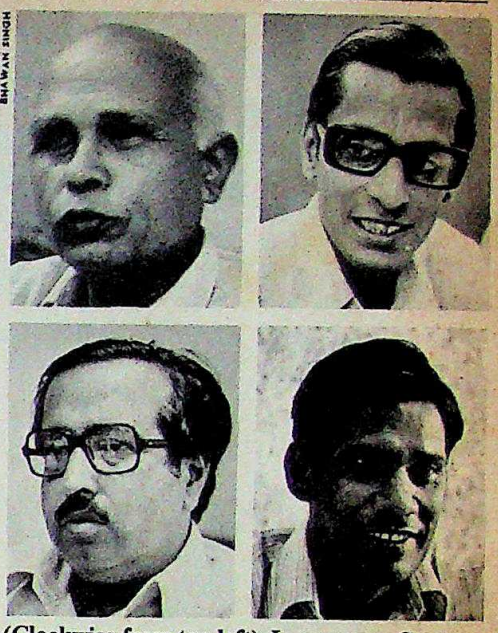
Sports medicine is an important part of modern sport and the NIS is breaking out of the stone age. Its sports research centre has taken up a number of programmes which include complete documentation of a player's health—one result was that all women athletes and 10 per cent of the men are anaemic. The clinic tries, according to Deputy Director Dr Ashok Ahuja, to ensure that there is no break in the training—three days off the field means the loss of a week's training and minor injuries are treated firmly. The centre recently acquired a Rs 5.5 lakh computerised tester to measure the aerobic capacity of players.

The Rs 2 crore question is—Rs 2 crore being the institute's annual budget—whether all the new equipment, all the new coaches, and all the astroturf will deliver the golds in November. The answers will be available before then—from Russia and Canada where the wrestlers are going to try out their newly learned skills, from Amsterdam where the Indian hockey team is trying its luck once again in the Champions Cup tournament, from China where eight Indian archers are trying theirs, and from the September Nationals in Delhi where players and stadia will be on test. Only these successes can make the Indian players and the NIS coaches match the smile on the face of Appu.

—JAGANNATH DUBASHI in Patiala

Adile Sumariwala: hopefuls





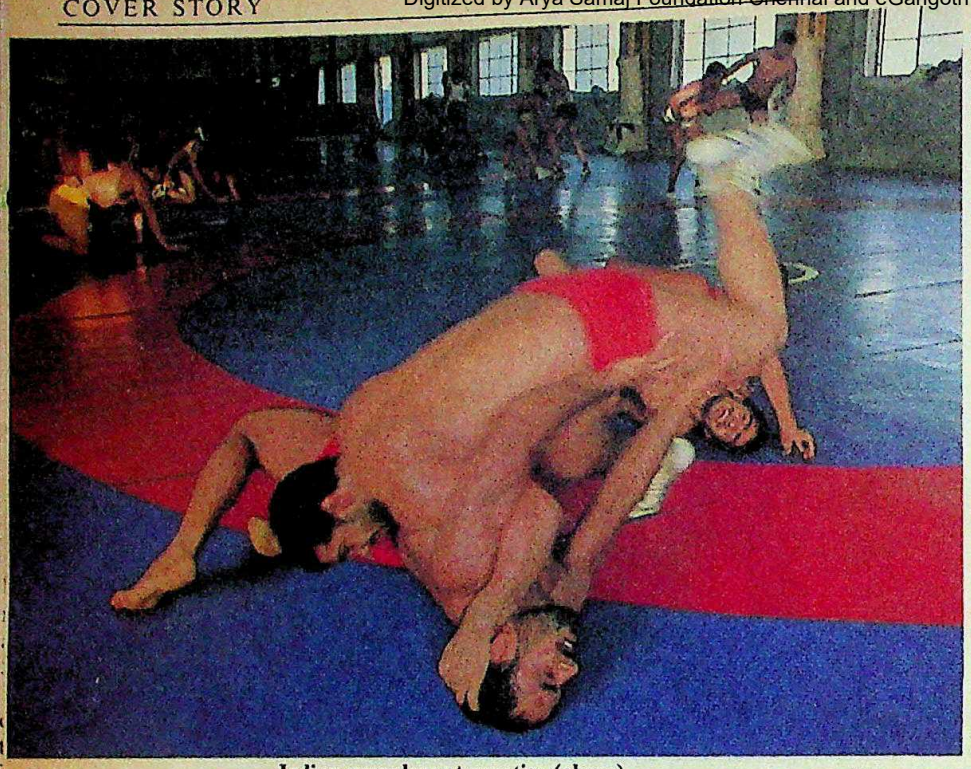
(Clockwise from top left) Jayaraman, Sarma, Chawla and Rishi: working under pressure

site was located and approved, it was June 1980. By July, the conceptual drawings were handed over and on August 2, we submitted our estimates," says N.C. Jayaraman, the balding, affable chief engineer of the project. Actual work started on October 26, 1980 which gave them less than two years in which to construct an international Olympic standard stadium. "It is entirely our own design and concept and the best part is none of us had ever seen an international stadium before," says S. Gupta Sarma, the thin, earnest man in charge of the complex lighting system. Sarma, Jayaraman, S.K. Chawla, the superintending engineer and M.K. Rishi, the architect who designed the actual stadium, all feel that it has been a joint effort. "It has been a period of considerable tension and trauma," they chorus, "the short time span has limited our work but it is still a matter of great pride and satisfaction."

THE ASIAD limelight will fall squarely on the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, a sprawling, saucer-like structure spread over a 100-acre plot in the heart of the city with a seating capacity of 75,000, which will stage the Games' glamour events—the opening and closing ceremonies, athletics and football. Scheduled to be completed in the incredible time span of 20 months, this stadium is of Olympic standards with an eight-lane synthetic track girding a green football field. Towering above the stadium like giant insects are four steel towers, each 57.5 metres high, which will provide the lighting for the stadium to facilitate colour TV transmission and floodlit events. Each headframe perched at the end of the towers is the size of a tennis court and consists of 172 metal Halide lamps of 2 kw each and 84 Halogen lamps of 1 kw

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BHAWAN SINGH

Indian grapplers at practice (above) and (right) a diver framed in the upraised arms of another

each. A giant scoreboard, 9 metres high, of the matrix type will flash out instant results in English and Hindi as well as black and white pictures. It will be connected to a computer-controlled micro-processor. The scoreboard will also be connected to a computer terminal which will enable it to display almost instant results of events taking place at other venues. It will be supplied and operated by Seiko.

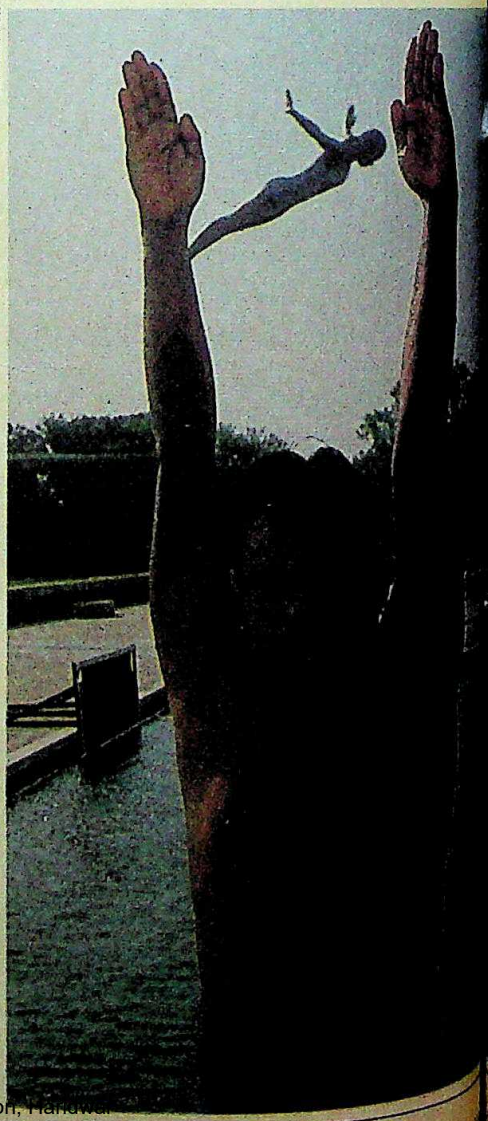
Other, no less ambitious projects include the Games Village which is virtually a township and will accommodate about 5,000 athletes and officials. The houses themselves are easily the best design that the DDA has evolved so far, with a theatre for the performing arts, a giant reception centre, a dining area capable of feeding 2,000 people at a time, a discotheque, and a 60-foot water tower with a restaurant and viewing gallery.

Test: Though the Asiad infrastructure is almost complete except for the cosmetic applications, the real test will lie in the running of the Games, which will be handicapped by India's relative inexperience. Organising, and monitoring an event as gigantic as the Asiad is an unenviable exercise that will entail the use of 2,600 technical officials, 2,000 general officials, 1,000 ushers, 2,000 men from the Indian army and the BSF for security and 600 people as liaison officers and receptionists. "We are not claiming that it will be an easy task but we have identified all the possible problem areas and I think we will be able to pull it off," says Bhalindra Singh.

The actual cost of running the 15-day Games has been optimistically estimated at around Rs 15 crore but the SOC, if it plays its cards right, should earn more than that from various sources. In fact, one prime example of the SOC's inexperience is that they were convinced that the major source of revenue would be from the sale of tickets. It was only much later that it dawned on them that the Asiad is big business. The biggest money-spinner is the sale of television advertising rights and arena advertising inside the various stadia. A Dubai firm, Metco, has agreed to pay $6 million (Rs 5.4 crore) for arena advertising rights while a Los Angeles-based company, Vipin Sehgal and Associates, have guaranteed a like sum. Together, the revenue from that and sponsorship of various TV programmes by multinational companies will net the SOC over Rs 10 crore.

Revenues: Foreign television rights have already been sold to the Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union and the Arab States Broadcasting Union for around Rs 21 lakh. In addition, the franchising of the logo and the emblem of the Games will bring another Rs 50 lakh. The sale of tickets is expected to bring in another Rs 15 crore since five Indian banks will pay the SOC Rs 1 lakh each to get their names printed on the back of the tickets. Mikasa of Japan, famous ball manufacturers, will also pay Rs 7 lakh for the privilege of having their name printed on the rear of the tickets in addition to supplying $60,000 (Rs 5.4 lakh) in royalty fees as "official ball supplier" to the Games". Mikasa will also supply 300 balls each for football, volleyball, handball, water polo and basketball.

Similarly, a total of $110,000 (Rs 9.9 lakh) in cash and sporting goods will be supplied by top sports manufacturers like Asics, Dunlop, Yonex, Garuda and Gill. Gill estimates that the eventual revenue from the Games should wind up around the Rs 100 crore mark. Little wonder then, that the SOC has already made a bid for staging the 1990 Afro-Asian Games and is also hoping to be staking a powerful claim for the 1992 Olympics as well. But that is really putting the cart before the horse.



BHAWAN SINGH

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One major area where the SOC has been is in the pre-publicity of the Games. ew people outside Delhi have an idea at the Games are all about or what the vements have been so far. Tarlochan the public relations head of the SOC, that they have been lax in publicising Games, or exploiting the souvenirs and for commercial purposes.

Publicity: The SOC, however, has an er to that accusation. Buta Singh and ay that the publicity has been ly low-keyed because of accom- restrictions. "We can easily 0,000 visitors for the Games but if there accommodation for them they will go with a bad image of us," says Gill. SOC es that the maximum accom- ion available for the Games will 500 rooms. So far, travel agencies and report a negligible amount of gs for the Asiad but it is certain to up in the months ahead, particularly Japan which is expected to walk away



BHAWAN SINGH

Bhalindra Singh (left) and Buta Singh

with a major share of the medals. Current indications are that there will be at least 10,000 spectators from outside Delhi who will be here for the Games but many of those from inside the country will probably make their own arrangements with relatives and friends. The delay in producing the tickets means that they will go on sale only next month, barely four months before the start of the Games.

As it is, the pre-Asiad preparations have produced some bitter lessons, apart from the laxity in the publicity campaign. Even inside the maze-like offices in Pragati Maidan that house the SOC headquarters, the organisation is derisively referred to as "Sikh Organising Committee", a none too subtle dig at the number of turbaned heads that occupy the jerry-built offices. Many of the occupants have found their way there because of political connections rather than any specific merit. Gill, the operational head, has antagonised a number of SOC employees because of his autocratic behaviour and his bureaucratic approach to problems. Last fortnight, Lt-General Harbuksh Singh, a distinguished army officer, quit the SOC because of differences with Gill and at least three others have preceded him for the same reason.

Indian sports history is littered with disaster stories all involving the excessive concentration of members of a particular community and it might be advisable to avoid such concentrations if only to keep

A bird's-eye view of the sprawling village complex for the 5,000 athletes expected for the Asiad



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events like the Asiad free from further controversies. It is also questionable whether a full-time politician like Buta Singh, despite his status as head of the Amateur Athletic Federation, should be put in charge of similar projects. Buta Singh may have contributed much to the success of Asiad but his political duties bar him from giving off his best.

Slogan: The SOC has also been taken to task for the "junkets" its officials have been on. Originally, Air-India had agreed to provide 200 free tickets for Asiad officials but by last month, according to SOC figures, 225 tickets had already been utilised, all under the catch-all heading of learning from the experiences of previous major sporting events held elsewhere. The favourite destinations have been Los Angeles, Montreal, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Moscow. In fact, a popular slogan doing the rounds goes: "Join Asiad and see the world."

The question of whether India is capable of getting ready for the Games on time has disappeared but it has been replaced by one that is equally vital and looms as large—whether India can stage a successful Asiad. Politics rendered the Olympics in Munich and Moscow a disaster and though the Asiad should be free of political handicaps barring the tension between two participants, Iran and Iraq, anything could happen. Shankaran Nair, the man in charge of Asiad security, insists that all possible precautions have been taken and all visitors will be thoroughly screened, apart from the stadia being searched one hour before opening each day to avert possible bomb threat hoaxes.

But security alone is not the only headache that Asiad '82 will face. The Lok Dal and George Fernandes & Co have threatened to launch protests against the Games though most people are hoping that better sense will prevail. After all, Asiad '82 is India's big bid for international stardom. For 15 days, New Delhi will be making international headlines, for an event that, in terms of prestige, is the biggest stakes India has played for in a long time. November will be the moment of truth.

—DILIP BOBB with ASOKA RAINA

CONTROVERSIES

Asiad's Other Side



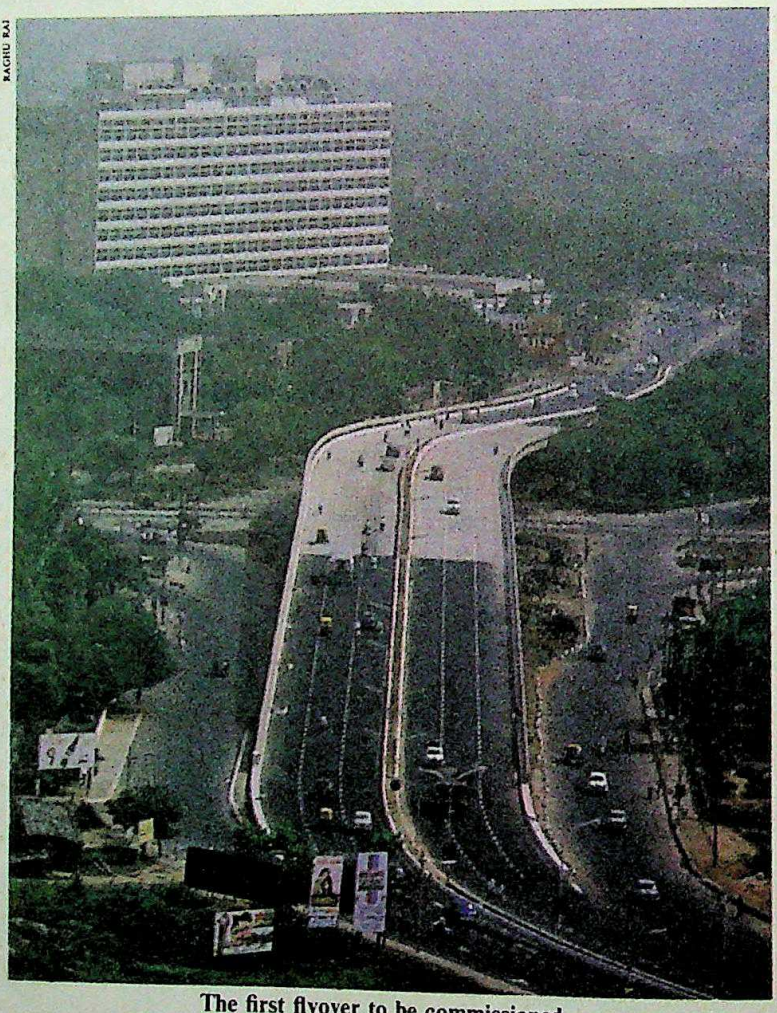
CONTROVERSY dogs the IX Asiad like the old man used to cling to Sindbad the sailor. Starting with the heated arguments over whether the Games were really necessary, the incessant wrangles have embraced the colossal cost, the politicisation of the organising committees, favours allegedly rendered in allotting prime hotel sites with financial support for construction, the selection of contractors with shady records and any number of alleged irregularities committed in purchases in India and abroad.

The Asiad project has progressed through four governments—it was mooted during Mrs Gandhi's Emergency regime, gained strength during Morarji Desai's Janata regime, nearly came a cropper in Charan Singh's caretaker regime, and finally consolidated after Mrs Gandhi turned to power in 1980. Charan Singh objected to the "luxurious" games, the Congress(I) Government created fresh problems by refusing to recognise the committees constituted during the Janata and by delaying the selection of venues for the events.

A new Special Asian Games Organisation Committee (SOC) was set up under Charan Shukla, and Haryana were chosen as venues. The Haryana Government under Chief Minister Bhajan Lal launched a massive construction drive at Rai, Haryana. But the authorities suddenly discovered that the site was unsuitable for security and transport reasons and the project was scratched. Four precious months had been lost and at last Delhi was asked to shoulder the entire responsibility for the Games.

Changes: Just then, major changes took place at the top levels leaving lower-level officials in a quandary. Shukla resigned from the SOC after resigning from the Union Cabinet. The new education minister, Nurul Hasan Chavan, who was chairman of the steering committee of the Cabinet on the Asiad Games, was moved to Planning, and Minister of State for Education Sheila Kaul took charge as the Education Ministry is the nodal ministry for the Games. Thus, a minister of state presiding over a group which had three Cabinet ranksters—an unusual arrangement. Says a Congress MP who, despite repeated requests, has not been made a member of the Asiad committees: "All the changes at the top level were done to accommodate a particular group. Merit was just ignored."

Most of the 28 committees are filled with Congress(I) MP's and senior IAS officers who have hardly any experience of organising a major sports event. No office bearer of the over 100 sports organisations


RAGHU RAI

The first flyover to be commissioned

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...y is chairman or vice-chairman of any ...ittee. The MP's in the committees in... Arun Nehru, Madhav Rao Scindia, ... Nabi Azad, Jagdish Tytler, ... Dass Shastri, H.K.L. Bhagat, ... Kumar, R.N. Mirdha and ...ndra Singh—all from the ruling ...and Sheikh Abdullah, who can hardly ...ed of a consuming interest in sports. ...pite the 'harmonious' composition ...committees, there have been key ... Almost all the commitees' mem... been changed thrice. Charanjit ..., was earlier chairman of three ...—catering, accommodation and ...and health—but has been shifted ...e. However, his soft drink Campa ...e official drink for the Games. ...overnment's Double Seven will be ...0 paise as against the market rate ...Cola. Participants will be supplied ...Cola free.

...oglings: Many senior IAS and other ...with questionable records in their ...e part of the SOC. A public relations ...f the Press Information Bureau was ...ort to make way for the confidant of ...e Union Cabinet minister. At a later ...new vice-chairman, General J.T. ...hi, came to handle the situation, but ...ngs had had their effect, not only ...ect but also in the various implemen...gencies: the DDA, the Central Public ...Department (CPWD), the New Delhi ...al Committee (NDMC), the Munici...poration of Delhi (MCD) and the ...Tourism Development Corporation ...among others. Among the prominent ...rities are:

- ...election of Sharat Dass as architect ...DA's Indraprastha Indoor Stadium, ...e had won second prize in the ...chitectural committee on the plea that ...be possible to complete the project ...two years;
- ...election of sites for some flyovers ...r faulty designs. For example, ac...to a survey conducted by a non...gency, the flyover in front of Oberoi ...as not necessary. The Barakhamba ...flyover will create more traffic jams;
- ...purchase of imported cars by the ...e differences between the ITDC and ...nion Ministry over the choice of imported cars delayed the actual import by over a year. While the ITDC was in favour of the Datsun and the Mercedes, the Ministry was promoting the Toyota;
- ► the selection of foreign and Indian consultants;
- ► the allotment of three hotel sites to pro-Congress(I) businessmen by changing the land-use pattern in some cases:
- ► Seven hotels, excluding the ITDC's, are not likely to be completed by November; three have not progressed beyond the first floor, and piling operations are not yet over. At a recent SOC meeting, Tourism Secretary Dr B. Venkatraman who is in charge of coordination, hotel construction, reported that the promised hotel accommodation would not be available. Prudently, the SOC had decided to hire rooms in guest houses.

When Asiad work started, the three ITDC hotels—Samrat (300 rooms), Kanishka (300 rooms) and Ashok Yatri Niwas (526 rooms)—were already under construction. Eight private businessmen were given permission to construct hotels for a total of 1,596 rooms. In January 1982, when the SOC reviewed the construction, it discovered that at the present rate of construction, only 500 rooms would be ready by September 1982.

The SOC conducted another review last month: only five hotels—Centaur, Samrat, Maurya Sheraton extension, Asian Hotels and Siddharth Intercontinental—were on schedule while Surya International, Indian Hotels, the DDA's Bharat Hotel, Meridien Hotel and Park Hotel were lagging behind. It also appeared that two private hoteliers had been giving vastly inflated reports on their progress: they had said they would provide 260 rooms by November 1982, but they hadn't finished piling work.

The SOC officials also did not care to visit the sites before recommending the cases for financial support by the Government. The investment in each hotel is: Indian Hotels—Rs 33 crore, Surya International—Rs 15.50 crore, Asian Hotels—Rs 33.63 crore, Siddharth Intercontinental—Rs 9.90 crore, Maurya Sheraton extension—Rs 6.40 crore, Bharat Hotel—Rs 18 crore, Park Hotel—Rs 23 crore, Meridien Hotel—Rs 35.65 crore, Centaur Hotel—Rs 30 crore, and other hotels—Rs 60 crore.

Concessions: The SOC did not question the allotment of site, steel, cement, import licences, soft loans and the violation of the master plan in the case of the laggards. Two have been allowed to sell 25 to 40 per cent of the covered area as commercial space instead of the 17 per cent normally permitted. Over 50,000 tonnes each of cement and steel was granted to these hotels at priority and concessional rates; they got low interest loans despite the credit squeeze.

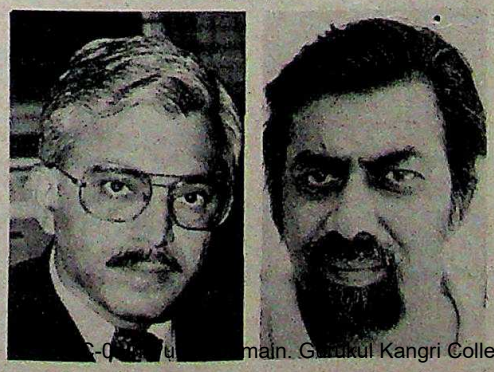
After hotels, costs. Central Government figures never rise above Rs 67 crore, while Opposition leaders' estimates hover around Rs 600 crore. A calculation shows that the actual expenditure on construction of all structures is around Rs 472 crore (*see chart*). Much of the cost over-run is due to additional building taken up in the name of the Games. The NDMC got clearance from the SOC to cover the Shivaji Stadium with a 150m span roof for Rs 90 lakh. This technically unfeasible project was entrusted to a contractor who has considerable influence over NDMC officials and was stopped only when SOC member Arun Singh asked questions—the contractor is now demanding compensation.

Rising Costs: Each agency has also contributed to cost escalation. The DDA is responsible for three-fourths of Asiad construction and has added various new projects to its basic plan. For example, a Rs 11 crore players' complex which has come up at the indoor stadium was not part of the original idea. Despite the additions, the DDA is the only body which has been able to complete all its projects in record time. This includes the Yamuna velodrome and the Asiad village complex extending over 800 acres. Says Vice-chairman Ailawadi: "I can account for each and every penny spent on DDA projects. Without asking for additional funds from the Union Government we have created

ASIAD 82: SPENDING SPREE



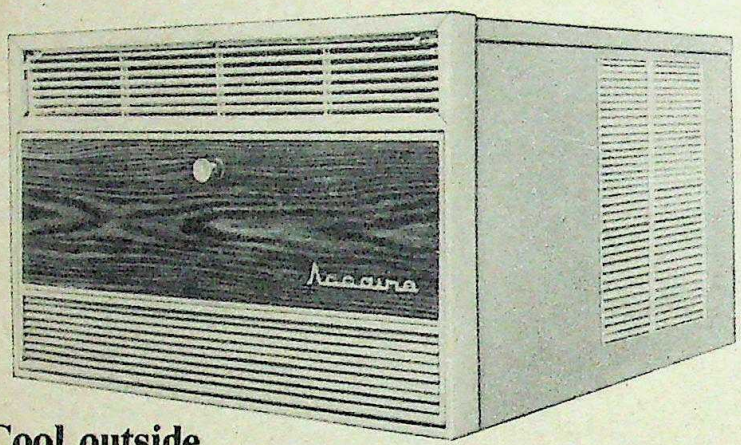
Ailawadi (left) and Grover



...main. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar

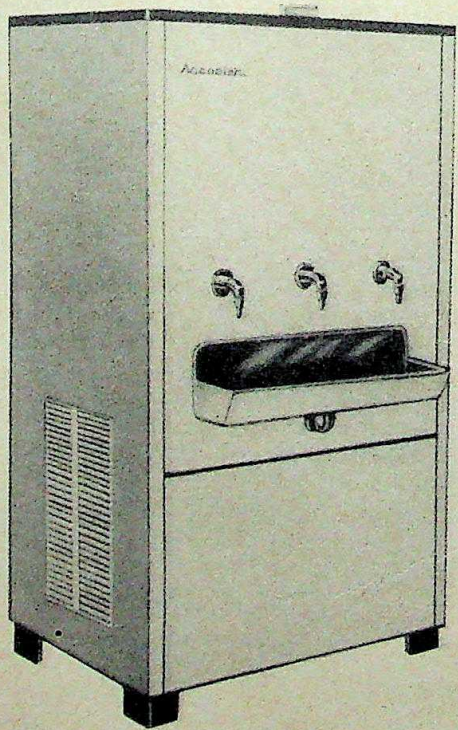
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which will give us additional revenue
r Rs 1 crore every month."
The Asiad has proved a useful peg for
e trips. Between them, over 100 off-
of the DDA, the ITDC, the Tourism
ry, the CPWD and the SOC have circled
ce hunting for technical advice and
ds. According to SOC sources, com-
Secretary-General S.S. Gill and two
members have led the field in this
marathon. An embarrassed Education
y is averse to supplying the number
visits; an MP who asked for the
was told "it was being collected
be supplied in due course".

ntroversy Uncovered: The storm
the NDMC swimming pool is typical of
ation. The original plan, submitted
architect Satish Grover had the
ure pool both covered and air-
ioned. But when completed it will be
with accompanying air-conditioned
s. Swimmers will thus
negotiate different tem-
s inside and outside the
fferences between the
and NDMC officials are
ble for both the altered
and the delay.

Grover's design had
ted during the Janata
an attempt was made
e a new architect and
sign. But Mrs Gandhi
intervened and Gro-
survived—but not

Grover and his con-
Professor K.A. Patel,
ubles had just begun.
uthorities, unlike other
kept them away from
l construction and hired a con-
who had very little experience of
such a complex job involving a
meter roof.

ides, the present contractor, G. S.
& Co, did not even figure in the list of
ractors invited to submit tenders. His
was allegedly included after pressure
on the tender committee by poli-
and civil servants in the SOC secre-
The other names included leading
as Shah Construction, Shapoorji
& Co and Hindustan Construction
e list swelled to 10 to accommodate
ally five tenders were submitted and
was chosen because his tender was the
Rs 4.5 crore.

ng: While Atwal's quotation was
ck-bottom, it was the high cost of
that started fouling things up. In May
a retired government official that
had hired as his consultant prepared a
which was submitted to the NDMC.

The report said that Grover's design for the roof was faulty and that it would be unsafe to have a roof. The NDMC directed Atwal to stop work—without consulting Grover or Patel. It didn't even demand explanations from Atwal for not going through with the tender conditions. These held that the contractor should study the drawings in detail before offering himself for the job. Incidentally, Patel had won the first prize for designing the Indian pavilion at the Osaka exhibition in 1979.

Gill summoned NDMC officials and the contractor; again, the architect and his consultant were left out of the proceedings. Instead, a senior teacher at New Delhi's Indian Institute of Technology—a person unversed in steel structures—was entrusted with the job of finding out if the roof was stable or not. Says a junior engineer at the project: "This was like going to an eye specialist for a heart disease." The report came in September 1981, allegedly without incorporating computer tests, and stated that the roof was unsafe. The SOC accepted these findings without informing Grover.


BHAWAN SINGH

Work in progress at the swimming pool: unanswered questions

Fresh designs were called for and another architect came on the scene. Atwal was asked to restart construction of the pool while Grover and the new architect submitted new roof designs. A committee headed by Delhi Lt Governor S. L. Khurana, Gill, Arun Singh and V. S. Tripathi, joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Secretariat, again chose Grover's design. The design was sent to Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Bangalore, for computer tests, but before the report came, Grover was directed to design a roof-less swimming pool—which he did.

Cost Escalation: The delay had led to massive cost escalation. The total project cost, including air-conditioning and arena lighting was to be Rs 6 crore. Now the estimate stands at Rs 12.5 crore, a raise of over 100 per cent. The pool itself would cost Rs 8.5 crore, up from the Rs 5.4 crore originally allocated. Seeing that the costs were getting out of hand, SOC took control of the project. The NDMC chief engineer was replaced with another and a project implementation board which included Khurana and Gill was constituted. But architect and consultants are being kept away.

The swimming pool is at last nearing completion—*sans* roof—but unanswered questions remain:

► Why were tenders called for a second time when there were reputed construction firms already in the field?

► Did the tender committee look into the feasibility of implementing a project worth Rs 6 crore at Rs 4.51 crore?

► Was Atwal's past record checked out?

► Why were Grover and Patel not asked to modify their roof design?

► Why were the architect and his consultant not involved in the consultations?

► Why has the responsibility for cost escalation not been fixed so far?

► How was the second architect hired without competitions or advertisements?

► Why was the entire project given to one contractor?

Favourites Galore: There are no answers forthcoming to these questions. This leaves little room for doubt that from the beginning an attempt was made to ease out Grover and manipulate tenders in favour of favourites. Says a committee member: "The whole thing is extremely suspicious. The entire exercise has been done to ensure some extra benefits to some persons." Atwal has reportedly been given an advance of Rs 85 lakh. He is also likely to demand compensation for the loss he has suffered for not doing the job he was contracted for. He has already submitted a long list of orders and advances he had made for completing the pool with the roof. Atwal has a legally sound case, thanks to NDMC bungling.

The authorities, however, dismiss this and other controversies as insignificant and without substance. Says R. S. Gupta, DDA member (engineering): "We have ensured that the ecological balance of Delhi is not disturbed. For every tree which has been cut for the various projects, we have planted at least 10." Asserts Bhishma Narain Singh, Union works and housing minister: "We should ignore minor lapses. I am proud of the engineers and officials who have given such wonderful pieces of architecture in such a short time."

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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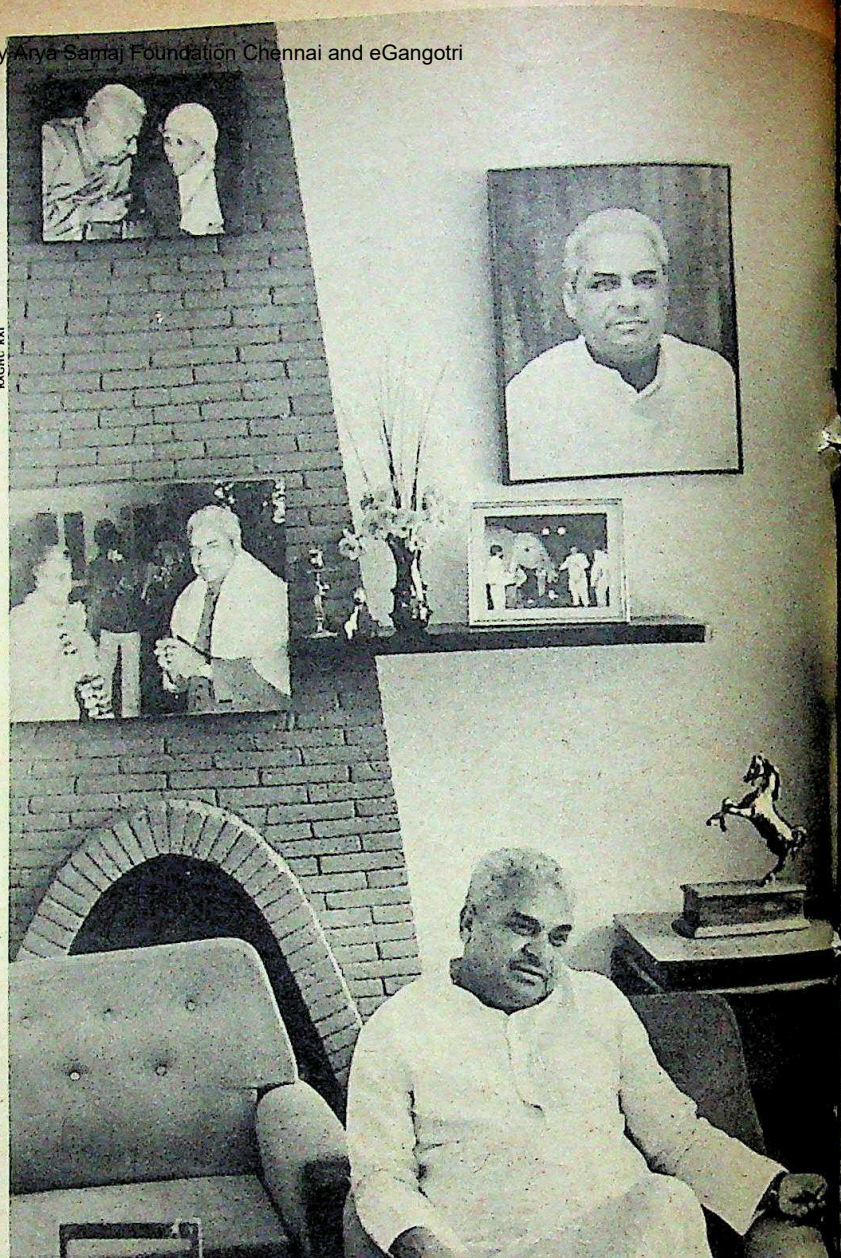
BHAJAN LAL

The Artful Manipulator

BHAJAN LAL is a name that is already heading for an epochal permanence. Though in an entirely negative way. He is credited with superhuman powers of persuasion, extraordinary talent to spot purchasable legislators in the enemy camps, and a demonic flair for wrecking all opposition alliances. Leaders opposed to him hate him as they would a snake. His friends repose absolute trust in him as the mafiosi would trust the don. Like a shrewd merchant in a caravan-town bazaar—which he indeed was—he can weigh the worth of each man he intends to buy. A one-man ruling party, he is a living reminder of the grim fact that democracy, like everything else, can be mercantilised, the eternal symbol of public behaviour sans morality. Chubby and grey at 52, he has already become a part of the rich folklore of his sun-baked, caste-ridden and politically unstable state of Haryana.

The nation first became aware of Bhajan Lal's extraordinary talents in 1979 when he, as a Janata minister, toppled the government of Devi Lal and became chief minister himself with a razor's-edge majority. He did it again the following year when, in the wake of Mrs Gandhi's triumphant return to power, he shepherded as many as 40 Janata MLA's into the Congress(I) camp. His acrobatic feat was promptly rewarded as the Congress(I) high command allowed him to continue as the chief minister. Now, in what will go down as one of the most sordid happenstances of the country's contemporary history, he has repeated his sleight-of-hand, for the third time after last month's inconclusive election. As the trial of strength takes place on the floor of the Haryana Assembly this fortnight, it is Bhajan Lal and his Congress(I) which is most likely to take the cake.

In the space of just four days Bhajan Lal came up from behind to grab the initiative and establish himself at the top of the Haryana heap (INDIA TODAY, June 15). He did so with commando type raids into the camp of Opposition leader Devi Lal who went to ludicrous lengths in guarding his 42 MLA's. Thirty Lok Dal volunteers armed with submachine guns and rifles kept watch over them in his fortress-like farmhouse surrounded by 1,000 acres of family land at Tejakhera, 250 km from Chandigarh. In another crafty move, Bhajan Lal neutralised his main opponent within the Congress(I) when he persuaded Mrs Gandhi's son Rajiv to arrange a meeting between him and Bansi Lal, the redoubtable Jat leader and former chief minister. As a result, three days later, his son Surinder Singh, a Congress(I) MLA, was sworn in as a minister in the Bhajan Lal cabinet. Said an AICC(I) executive, "Bhajan Lal can win over even God, and that too before He knows what's happening."



RAGHU RAI

Bhajan Lal: a demonic flair

Inimitable: In Haryana, the birthplace of the politics of defection, the only other person who could have matched Bh in his talent for MLA-grabbing is D himself. However, last fortnight, countdown for the Assembly session was increasingly clear that Bhajan heading for a clear majority in member house. "I have the suppo least 50 MLA's," he told INDIA TOD *interview*) gleefully. In contrast, D seemed desperate, and seething potent rage. At a press conference

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...ering the Assembly and the houses of ...ional defectors. His moral fervour was ...misplaced, considering the fact that he ...was trying to ride into power on the stilt ...defectors. His "modest aim", he announ... the press conference, was to lure away ...Congress(I) MLA's.

...Devi Lal was outclassed by Bhajan Lal's ...stamina, and, of course, his will... to freely use the official machinery ...political purposes. Rao Nihal Singh, the ...who had won on a Congress(J) ticket, ...'d' from the Tejakhera camp and ...his village home for his daughter's ... A suspicious Devi Lal followed ...ad. He found there yet another unin... guest, Bhajan Lal. Again, Giriraj Kishore, the Lok Dal MLA who had defeated the legendary Gaya Lal of 'Aya Ram Gaya Ram' fame, also left Tejakhera for home as his ailing uncle had died. Devi Lal dutifully provided him with an 'escort'. But Bhajan Lal had already sent his condolences, and the offer of a generous help for "funeral rites".

The fear of en masse desertion from Tejakhera loomed large as the wives of three of four MLA's or their sons and kinsmen, landed up at the camp daily. They sought interviews with their 'men', whispered the breathtaking 'offers' into their ears, and waved goodbye—leaving the MLA's on the horns of an agonising dilemma. It was a classic battle of nerves, and Bhajan Lal was freely using the police force to keep tabs on each opposition MLA.

Uncanny Clairvoyance: Haryana's master tempter, however, is far from being a charismatic personality. His oratory is poor, if not downright soporific. He is not even particularly popular among the masses. But he has one quality which neutralises all his drawbacks: an almost supernatural clairvoyance. Said Maniram Gudara, a former MP who had seen Bhajan Lal grow from rags to riches: "He has an extraordinary capacity to sense what the person he's dealing with needs most . . . money, power, prestige, a plot of land, an exciting companion . . . even if you don't name it you have it." Gudara says that Bhajan Lal is full of "shopkeeper's humility" which numbs the sense of guilt of

...TERVIEW

...They Trust Me"

SEVEN plainclothesmen, armed with ...invisible carbines, make an arc ...round him as he conducts his aam darbar *...the lawn of his bungalow each morning. ...alls himself a "people's man", but is ...at ease in the company of* MLA's *and ...powerbrokers of Haryana politics. ...says he was an amateur wrestler but ...an oily charm which seems slippery ...than brawny. Last fortnight* INDIA ...Correspondents SUMIT MITRA *and* ...CHAWLA *spoke to this elusive ...of Indian politics. Samples:*

● **On his apprenticeship in politics:** "I ...say what led me into politics. I ...it's my basic love to be in the midst ...people. In 1952 I became member ...panchayat. Later, I became member ...panchayat samiti and the zilla ...ad to become, finally, the chairman ...panchayat samiti. The late Sardar ...Singh Kairon told me after my ...that 'with your votes seven peo... could have got elected'. In 1967 I ...a Congress ticket but did not get ...I helped the Congress candidate ...way. Next year, after the Government ...fallen, there was a mid-term poll and ...a ticket. I won, and was given a ...folio by my *bade bhai*, Chaudhury ...Lalji."

● **On his early association with the ...ers of defection:** "You see, 13 people ...ected from the Congress in 1968, but I ...got back 14. You must know how to ...with people, how to inspire their ...fidence. People know that Bhajan Lal ...his word. Minister *banayenge to* ...*banayenge*, chairman *banayenge to ba...nayenge*. They know that Bhajan Lal respects people, he is not mean, he doesn't insult others. It's not a question of duping or coercing somebody into the party. One has to build up credibility first."

● **On his defection from the Congress:** "It's true that there was some misunderstanding in 1977. But I had never approved of Devi Lal and his ways. During the Janata rule, when Mrs Gandhi came to Haryana, I was the first to welcome her. . . just like the old days, you know. I was the first person to offer her condolence after she was defeated. When she lost I made a public statement that the country had slid ten years backward.

"People know that Bhajan Lal keeps his word. They know that he respects people, he is not mean, he doesn't insult others. It's not a question of duping or coercing somebody into the party. One has to build up credibility first."

Main tha atma se Congress, *sharir se* Janata. (My soul was in the Congress, only my body was in the Janata)."

● **On how defection affects society:** "Defection does not cost the society anything. Why do you ask that? Have the people faced any problems? There have been thousands of miles of new roads, thousands of villages have been electrified, the Harijan areas have been improved, the 20-point programme has been implemented. This has happened despite defection. Isn't that so?"

● **On the immorality of defection:** "What's immoral in it? Is it morally justified to keep MLA's imprisoned in somebody's farmhouse and to prevent them from exercising their free will? And, unless there is a law against defection, how does the question of morality arise? If it's legal how can it be immoral? Also, the people who have joined us are mostly Congressmen. The man who has been denied ticket does not necessarily cease to be a Congressman."

● **On why people return to him:** "There can't be any question of bribing them. *Sawal nahin paida hota* (the question does not arise). They've come back because they love me and they trust me. They know there is no casteism in the Congress. Moreover they're all members of the same Congress family. It is like a family reunion. I'm telling you, there will be a stable government here. At least 50 MLA's will be on our side."

● **On Rajiv Gandhi:** "I haven't done anything without his approval. He is very sober. He is very *kabil* (capable). He considers every step carefully. He gives very good guidance. *Aanewala waqt batayega ek din Rajiv Panditji ka moquabila karenge* (the future will prove that Rajiv can match up to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru)."

● **On himself:** "I'm an early riser. I walk on the lawn every morning. Glance at the headlines. Then I open the files—one and a half hours every morning. The brain stays cool then. I still find time to read religious books. I trust in God, very much. Back in my youth I used to freak out on kabaddi and wrestling. Great games. In my youth I took on every wrestler in my weight group whom I knew. I've been maintaining a steady 82 kg. And I'm still wrestling—in a metaphorical sense, of course."

● **On whether he would defect from the Congress(I):** "Are you crazy? I'd never repeat the mistake."

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the recipient of his favour..

In Haryana, the 12 defectors, eight of whom have become ministers now, squirmed away from any suggestion of having been bribed into their decisions. Yet it was Ram Singh himself who had claimed, till a day before he rejoined the Congress(I), that Bhajan Lal had promised him "Rs 20 lakh in cash".

In addition, the defectors were given plum ministerial berths: Brij Mohan Singla, the Lok Dal defector, got independent charge of the corruption-ridden Excise Department; Lachhman Singh, who rejoined the Congress(I) after cavorting for days with Devi Lal, was given the money-spinning Industries portfolio; Rajendra Singh, another independent-turned-Congress(I), got Food and Supplies—a fast-buck bonanza.

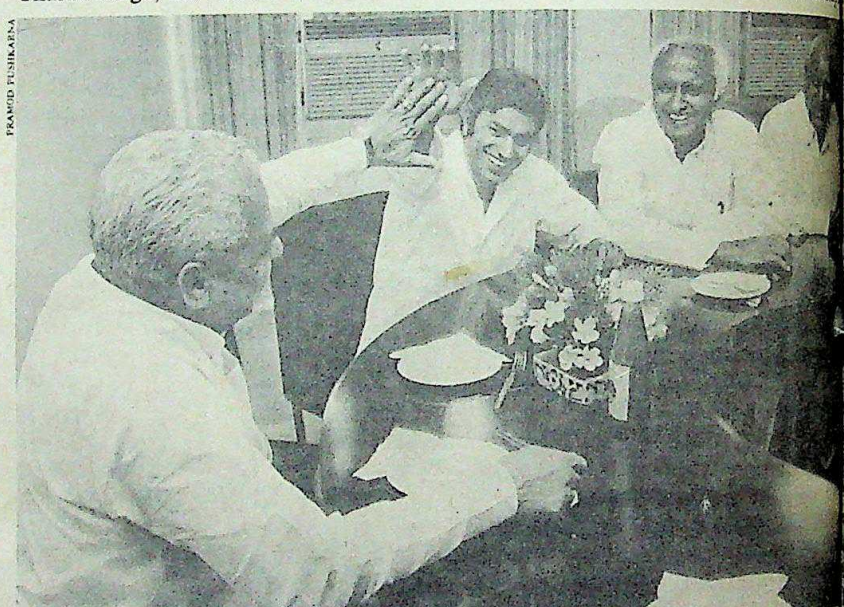
Bhajan Lal perfected his knack of dishing out favours soon after the historic 1980 mass defection of his entire cabinet and most of his legislature party within a fortnight of Mrs Gandhi's electoral victory. Later on he used his discretionary power to allocate choice residential plots—at Panchkula near Chandigarh and at Faridabad near Delhi—almost as legal tender for political transactions. The 500 sq yard plots, each of which was originally offered at around Rs 75,000, now sells for around Rs 4 lakh, and the price is still rising.

THE LIST of political persons, high court judges and officials who were allotted plots from the chief minister's discretionary quota is revealing. Among the defecting ministers those who got plots are: Desh Raj (two plots); Lal Singh (one for himself and one for his wife); Jagan Nath (one for himself and two for his wife); K.L Poswal (three plots); Gajraj Bahadur Nagar (two plots); M.S. Rathi (one plot); Tara Singh (one plot); Sher Singh (one plot); and Shamsher Singh Surjewalla (one plot), the defecting MLA's were not left out: out of 40 defectors, 33 were allotted plots from the chief minister's discretionary quota. Even the celebrated Gaya Lal got two plots.

The takers of Bhajan Lal's largesse also include Ganpatrao Devji Tapase, the controversial Governor of Haryana who played the overzealous midwife to the patently illegitimate Congress(I) ministry last month. Tapase's wife was allotted one plot while four other plots were allotted in the name of his personal staff. And, in an outrageous display of expediency, 15 of the 19 sitting judges of Punjab and Haryana High Court, including Chief Justice S.S. Sandhewalia, accepted plots from the chief minister's quota.

Bhajan Lal's munificence, however, has never been confined to the state of Haryana. In fact the key to his highly successful public relations in the Congress(I), which he rejoined in 1980, has been judicious allotment of land to important party functionaries or their relatives. Example: C.M. Stephen, the bumbling Union minister for communication, a resident of Kerala, has been given a plot at Faridabad: Indra Hathi, wife of the late governor of Haryana, Jaisukhlal Hathi, has got a plot at Faridabad; Sarla Sharma, president of the Himachal Pradesh Congress(I), has been allotted one at Panchukula; Gurdeep Kaur, who was allotted a plot at Panchkula, is the daughter of Union Home Minister Giani Zail Singh. Lest somebody charge Bhajan Lal with being partisan, he promptly cleared a proposal, put up by the earlier Devi Lal ministry, to allot a plot in Faridabad to Chaudhury Charan Singh, the veteran Lok Dal leader.

Still Bhajan Lal has the ... Janus. To those who simply ... bought he uses the dragoons of ... Criminal Investigation Department ... He has always held its charge himself ... has not hesitated to unleash on his op... the entire might of the state. A ... example is the police harassment ... Harminder Singh Ritole, a spirited ... leader of the Hissar district Lok ... On May 30, he was arrested for a ... incident that had happened at Fatehabad ... May 19. However, Harminder's "offence" was that his brother, Gurdev Ritole had, three months ago, filed a petition at the High Court against ... Lal. It alleged that the chief minister ... pressurised the Fatehabad Market ... Committee to lease out to his two re...



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Bhajan Lal and Surinder Singh reach out to each other: a temporary togetherness

Lucrative Berths: Next to land, the other accepted currency in Haryana's political cornucopia is a lucrative berth either in the council of ministers or as chairman of any of the state's 36 boards and corporations. Bhajan Lal has been amazingly generous in distributing such favours. In 1980, following his great leap chairward, he expanded his cabinet to 26, thus making every second member of the 50-strong Congress(I) Legislature Party a minister. Nobody was really left out. Even the irrepressible Gaya Lal was rewarded with chairmanship of the Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board—a key post for a small state which grows nearly 5 per cent of the country's net foodgrain production. As many as seven corporations were almost overnight bejewelled with party MLA's as chairmen, a decision which came in for trenchant criticism in the Assembly.

at a paltry monthly rent of Rs 130, a ... yard park named after Sanjay ... Fumes Harminder, who is now in ... custody: "I'm getting offers that ... against me would be dropped if my ... withdrew the writ petition."

Bhajan Lal uses power or pel... position, but to maintain it he ... entirely different set of methods. Says ... maned Prem Bhatia, editor-in-chief ... *Tribune*: "The caste-ridden pe... Haryana makes it easy for a politi... knows the contour of the land to ... Bhajan Lal and Haryana are really ... each other. He is not a sophisticated ... but he knows his people. And he ... amoral. He is only interested in ge... . . . no matter how he gets there."

Machiavellian Tactics: Bhajan ... nius at playing castes and personal... nst each other seems like ...

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PROFILE

Humble Trader

BHAJAN Lal had learnt the art of buying and selling from age 17 and that too at the *mandi* of his native village, Adampur, 25 km from Hissar. His father, Kheraj, who is still alive, crossed over into India after Partition from their ancestral home at Baha-walpur, now in Pakistan. One day, as the elder and younger brother left at dawn for work the fields, Bhajan Lal slunk out to the great *mandi*, watched piles of grain and ghee being mounted on camel-carts, and decided to discard the plough and take to trade.

The family belonged to the community of Bishnois, a secular sect believing in non-violence and vegetarianism. The natural qualities that Bhajan Lal inherited from the community suited his career in trading, and, as history proved later, horse-trading. One of the 29 tenets the Bishnois cherish is humility. Even Bhajan Lal's worst enemies admit that he was never found wanting in this quality. Says a retired police official at Adampur: "Thirty years ago, when he used to hawk cloth and women's clothes on his head, he would invariably fold his hands to greet a senior person. He does it even now."

It is during those days that Pokhar Mal, a wily trader and a fellow Bishnoi, noticed his genius as a tradesman. It was instant friendship. The duo went to Hardwar, exchanged turbans, and became each other's 'brother' (*dharam bhai*). In a few years' time, a shop came up at Mandi Adampur with a signboard that read: "Pokhar Mal-Bhajan Lal: Commission Agents."

Two-way Operation: In the '50s, commission agents in the north Indian grain markets got a 1.5 per cent share of the profits as intermediary between the farmer and the wholesaler. It was a two-way operation: locating the farmer with surplus stock and timing the sale for maximum profit. Pokhar Mal and Bhajan Lal worked like Siamese twins—Bhajan Lal looking after the farmers' end and Pokhar Mal taking care of the sales and accounts. Says Pokhar Mal: "Bhajan Lal always had an extraordinary capacity to deal with people. The farmers trusted him."

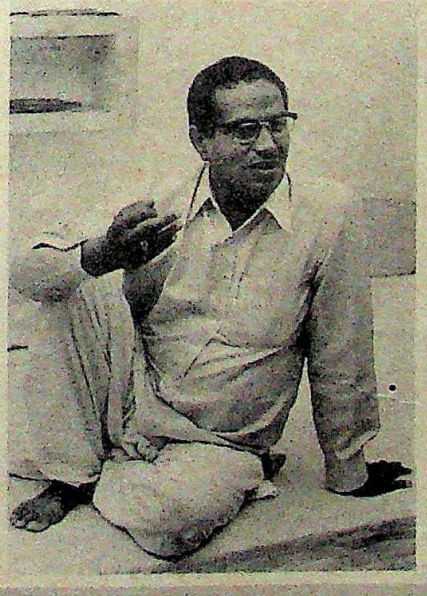
However, the Pokhar Mal-Bhajan Lal enterprise was branching out into all kinds of business—a gas station on the Delhi Road, and a theatre at Sirsa. Some of their new ventures were obviously not above board. Had it been so, Bhajan Lal would not have been convicted on March 3, 1959, to pay a fine of Rs 50 in case No. 30 (State vs Bhajan Lal) under section 61/1/14 of Excise Act. The particular act relates to inter-state smuggling of various commodities. For 10 years, Pokhar Mal was on 'basta bay' (B-list or the rough list) of the local police station and was periodically dragged in for interrogation.

At one stage, there were 12 criminal cases chasing Bhajan Lal, with charges ranging from rape to smuggling of grains. They were dropped as he became an MLA in 1968, but his trail is still to be found in the maze of police records at Hissar Sadar Police Station. For him a career in politics was initially an insurance against "police trouble", a fact which his early mentor, Maniram Gudara, now admits. He started off at the panchayat and district board organisations, but by April 1970 he was a full-fledged minister in the cabinet headed by Bansi Lal.

BHAWAN SINGH



BHAWAN SINGH



Bhajan Lal's shop (top) and (above) his partner Pokhar Mal: still trading

His relations with the redoubtable Jat soured in less than four years. Apparently, in spite of his much-touted clairvoyance, he had failed to read the mind of Bansi Lal who, apart from being a tyrant of sorts, is also a great stickler for discipline and efficiency. Bhajan Lal had very little of either. In 1973, he committed the *faux pas* of egging on Bansi Lal to promise to the Centre an unreal wheat procurement target. The target could not be met even half-way through. Bansi Lal, strictly a man of his word, never pardoned Bhajan Lal since then and in 1975, he unceremoniously dropped him from the Cabinet. Nor did it help matters much when Pokhar Mal was detained for six months under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during the Emergency, and the ground for detention given by the Hissar district authority was that he was a smuggler.

Amassing Plots: Nevertheless, whether in business or in politics, Bhajan Lal embodied the acquisitive instinct of a *bania*, the guts and the derring-do of a medieval merchant-pirate. A grim example is, again, the list of plots allocated to his own relatives from the chief minister's discretionary quota. The allottees are: Jasma Devi, his wife; Roshni Devi—his daughter; Vibha Devi—Roshni's mother-in-law; Hanuman—Bhajan Lal's maternal cousin's brother; Dwarka—son of Manphool, his brother; Surja—Bhajan Lal's brother-in-law; Pokhar Mal; Raj Bala—Pokhar Mal's daughter-in-law; Achint Ram Pokhar Mal's son-in-law; Jai Parkash—former private secretary to Bhajan Lal and Surja's relative; Atma Ram Bishnoi—brother-in-law of Jai Parkash; S.R. Dass—headmaster of the school where Bhajan Lal's two sons read; Shiv Kumar Sharma—retired police officer and a friend of the chief minister. And without any shame or guilt, Bhajan Lal allocated a plot at Faridabad to himself from his own discretionary quota.

It is this cool lack of concern for decorum that marks Bhajan Lal out from among others. He honestly believes that whatever is legal is also moral. He looks at power not as a means but as an end in itself. "In distributing favours he has not broken any law," innocently remarked his brother, Manphool, about him. So, nobody can really complain. After all, morality, like beauty, is often in the eye of the beholder.

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bourgeois edition of Mao Zedong's tract on "correct handling of contradictions". In fact threre is a strongly dialectical core to his methodology, which always looks for a line of fissure in the enemy bulwark. In 1977, when he joined Jagjivan Ram's Congress For Democracy en route to the Janata Party, he sensed that his main rival would be Devi Lal, who eventually became the chief minister.

But Bhajan Lal had already begun to cast his spell. Within a year he got the Lok Dal group and the Congress(O)-Jan Sangh group arrayed against each other, and he was really running rings round Devi Lal. On becoming the Janata chief minister in 1979, the first thing he did was to instigate differences between the Congress(O) group and the Jan Sangh group. Behind the backs of both, however, he was negotiating with Mrs Gandhi through her chief hatchetman, R.K. Dhawan.

The passport to Congress(I) was not won easily. When the stork visited the late Sanjay Gandhi's household, he presented the new-born Pheroze Varun with camels made of gold, ostensibly in accordance with a traditional Haryanvi ritual. This again was not uncharacteristic of the man. In 1977, he greased his own path into the Janata Party by presenting Morarji Desai with a mere three 18-kg tins of ghee.

However, once in the Congress(I), he needed only moments to perceive the main threats to himself in the fractious politics of the state: the dormant but powerful lobby of Bansi Lal; the Ahir group headed by the Union Agriculture Minister Rao Birendra Singh; the Brahmin lobby of Pandit Chiranji Lal; and the quiet but determined supporters of Chaudhury Dalbir Singh, Union deputy minister for petroleum and chemicals. A characteristically insidious game commenced.

HE began by joining hands with Rao Birendra Singh and Dalbir Singh against the most formidable enemy, Bansi Lal. All he needed was an alternative to the charismatic former chief minister in the state's Jat belt. The Jats, who are 25 per cent of the state's population, think of themselves as the ruling caste and their support has traditionally been the key to electoral success in Haryana. And Bhajan Lal's trump card was Balram Jakhar, the Lok Sabha speaker and a Jat, but this time the ploy did not work.

Quite unfazed, Bhajan Lal changed his strategy and began to befriend Bansi Lal this time. His recent success in roping Bansi Lal's son into the ministry is the culminating act to this new alliance. Simultaneously he started cooling off Rao Birendra Singh the moment it was apparent that the Ahir leader's grip was loosening on the state's rather backward


PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

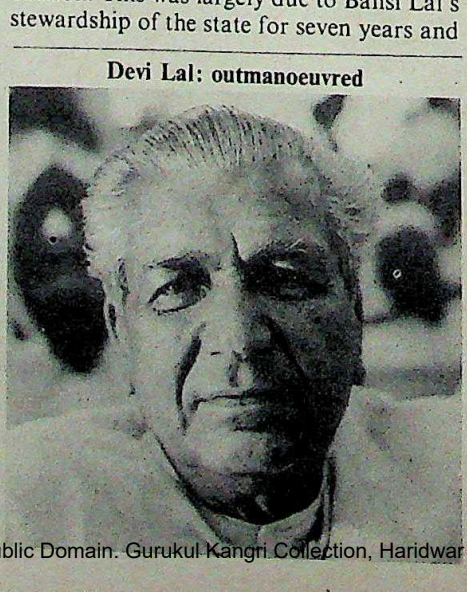
Bhajan Lal at the meeting where he was chosen the party leader: stage manage

Ahir belt. Bhajan Lal promptly picked up Colonel Rao Ram Singh, and used him as the scythe to hack through Birendra Singh's power base. He thus served the twin purpose of ensuring continuance of Ahir support as well as pegging down a minister in Delhi—always a threat for a Congress(I) chief minister.

Bhajan Lal is archetypal of kind of politics without any philosophy or ideology. Unlike Devi Lal, who went to jail during the 1942 movement, Bhajan Lal had no role in the freedom struggle, not even as a student volunteer. His family was settled in Bahawalpur with *murraba* land—the word meaning a square 25 acres—which used to be parcelled out by the British among loyal subjects. His milieu was totally devoid of any culture or tradition of public service.

The state of Haryana was carved out of the most backward areas of Punjab on April 1, 1966. In just 15 years, it made spectacular strides and notched up a high per capita income (Rs 1,600 in 1978-79) besides setting up enviable records in foodgrain production. This was largely due to Bansi Lal's stewardship of the state for seven years and

Devi Lal: outmanoeuvred



his tough but effective governance. Devi Lal showed glimmers of effective

Catastrophic Rule: But Bhajan L not come up with a single new idea, a new plan to galvanise the economy Mangal Sain, BJP leader of the state: "B Lal's forte is horse-trading. When it co administration and planning he is like out of water." Sain was hardly exagger During his catastrophic rule, the pro bility of nearly all public enterprises state plummeted. The net surplu Haryana State Electricity Board came from Rs 27.38 crore in 1979–80 to Rs crore in 1980–81. The surplus of Ha State Roadways Corporation declined Rs 2.61 crore in 1979–80 to Rs 87 la following year. Not an iota of capac added to the state's power genera pacity during his rule. During the fi of his government, the thermal po at Faridabad was shut down for lo

Bhajan Lal has circumvented t diocrity of his performance by his footed ways. He has tirelessly shu tween Chandigarh and Delhi, has finger carefully on the pulse of command and has kept the MLA's humour. "If you can't control t nomy," fulminated the tough Lok der, Chaudhury Birendra Singh, best thing to do is to control the

He has been the blithe spirit of of power, the symbol of a new a descending on India. In the process injected into the country's politica unprecedented cynicism and a colle gust with politics and politicians. politician: "The fact that Mrs Gan all has to rely on Bhajan Lal sh precipice to which the country brought." Beyond this "precipice" erosion of democratic values.

—STAF

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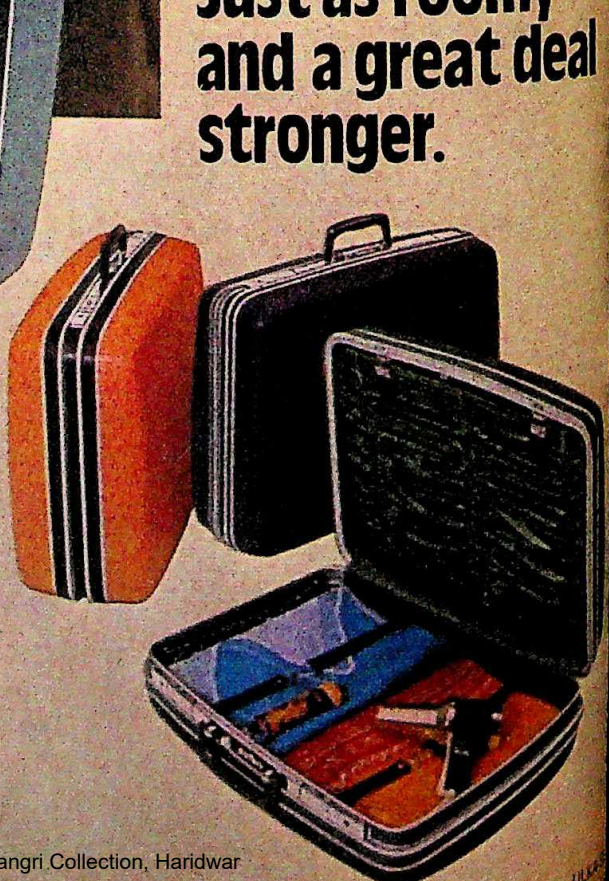
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e Parrot's Beak

FOR OVER four hundred years, villagers in Maharashtra have enjoyed *tamashas*. But the city is never far behind with its mutations. Last year, Dilip Chitre, perhaps the most idiosyncratic noclastic figure in Marathi letters ided the traditional folk form to an experimental play. Satyadev s that ageing *enfant terrible* of the gi stage is busy working on the pro- m. *Mithoo Mithoo Popat*, which opens nbay sometime in August.

The title recalls the nursery rhyme:

Mithoo mithoo popat
Ahe mota chavat
Khato Kairi kachi
Malach manhto luchi

It seems an innocuous enough rhyme, hing young girls are taught to sing long e they could possibly know what it s (*Sweet sweet parrot/Is such a Eats my raw mango/Calls me cunning*). ious enough, till one learns that *popat* quial for penis and marvellous am- s are implicit in the raw mango. 'It's familiar enough situation' explains . 'Popat is to the little girls what the was to Miss Muffet.'

Not quite a tamasha, and that's the . Subtitled *ek tamasha vaza khel* (a a-like play, and the pun is on play, *Mithoo Mithoo Popat* first appeared in Jirali's issue of *Abhiruchi*, a leading ati literary magazine, and won im- ate praise.

Simple Story: The curtain rises to reveal ls in six cages, and a man with an rous grotesque red beak. Six swift ctors follow, one in each scene, each g in Popat taking a girl behind the en. And after each encounter he returns, re more flabbergasted than before, each carrying a little burden of domesti- — now a *jharoo*, now a newspaper.

The play begins with the traditional e, the invocation to Ganesh, in which implores the Lord to digest in his pot- the sins of the playwrights, from kar to Tendulkar. Having set the tone bone hilarity, Chitre works his way gh a range of musical forms: mock o, *laonis, mantras, ball geet, taranas* ere a *kaida*:

Tamasha goes back at least to the 17th ry, when it acquired its present form: a ination of *laoni* (popular folk-songs) dance skits interspersed with mimicry. ndent stories about *tamasha* that cir- are chauvinistic accounts of how visiting troupes entertaining in Mughal camps in the Deccan did reconnaissance for Shivaji.

Tamasha is of two sorts: *sangeet phad* and *dholki phad*. The former is *lok natya* (popular drama) which has come to rest in the cities and which today means no more than some bad improvised *kathak* by tired painted dancers, more often than not singing indifferent Hindi film songs and the occasional *laoni*. It can be seen any night of the week, in Bombay at the Hanuman theatre at Lalbaug, or in Pune at the Aryabhushan Tamasha Theatre, where regulars congregate to while away their evenings. The performance takes place on a raised proscenium stage: men from the audience come forward to pay their favourites a rupee at a time. Occasionally the scene comes to life, for banter is not unfamiliar here, but on the whole the atmosphere is one of sad and seedy romance, not art.



Chitre: marvellous ambiguities

Degeneration: It is a slow decline, but obvious for all that. Various factors have conspired against *tamasha*. In 1954 Morarji Desai as chief minister of Bombay state imposed a ban on *tamasha* as it was *ashleel* (obscene). Representations were made, and a compromise effected. The Tamasha Board was set up, and all troupes were to submit their scripts for approval. Yesterday's Tamasha Board is today's Scrutiny Board, and now all plays put up in Maharashtra are subject to its censorship. This can hardly console the practitioners of *tamasha*. Such constraints can have radical consequences for an essentially extempore art. Of course the players still improvise, but the tyranny of a script is something they now have to cope with, even if only by ignoring it.

What the censor could not do, cinema has done. Ever since Dada Kondke took Dada Indorikar's *Shiksha* on to celluloid, *tamasha* routines have become obligatory in Marathi cinema. In Pune, Kishan Kusgaonkar, now past 70, and once actor Nilu Phule's guru, deplored this development, too. Cinema attendance has affected interest in *tamasha*. And the curious result of all this has been that now audiences demand that the original artistes perform the stylised mutant cinema has created.

Chitre is by no means the first to have taken *tamasha* to the stage. In the early '50s P.L. Deshpande employed *tamasha* conventions in plays like *Pudhari Paije* put up by the Seva Dal, and even earlier, the anti-Brahminical *Satya Shodhak Samaj* and the communists had tried using *tamasha* for their own didactic purposes. In 1956 Vyankatesh Madgulkar wrote *Bin Biaacha Jhar* which was a success. Over the years he has followed it up with *Kunacha Kunala Mel Nahin* (1958) and *Pati Gele Ga Kathewadi* (1974). He wrote *Sangti Aika* for Anant Mane using *tamasha*, and it was the longest running Marathi film ever. His plots are simple, often based on *laonis*. "I was born in a village and in all my writing I have tried to give a feeling of what it was like to have been brought up in a village." Madgulkar works at the AIR Station, Pune as a producer. "A lot of us found *tamasha* unsatisfactory for modern audiences because it was too amorphous, and it had no message. But it was an excellent form, so we worked on it. Of late though, there have been too many people producing a slick sophisticated *tamasha* for the stage—Vasant Sabnis for instance. Even on a city stage, *tamasha* should not lose its vitality," he says. What does he think of Chitre's play? "Dilip is a genius; in *Mithoo* he has used *tamasha* to say things, about sexuality for instance, that have not been said before, at least not in this form. But its success will depend on how it is performed."

Chitre has moved from the political to the personal, but his principal departure has been from the traditional. *Mithoo* is a *tamasha vaza khel*, no more. Its text has a richness that rewards ample study. "I have been reading it now for four months," says Satyadev Dubey, "and each time I find new meanings hidden in it." At the end of Chitre's play Popat lies in a heap, fatigued and emasculated by his misadventures. A six-foot tall Amazon in a nine-yard sari comes to remove Popat's beak, henceforth to be an object of veneration.

Ardha marda poorna sarda ('machismo halved, wholly frigid'), the Amazon and her acolytes dance around the supine Popat, chanting. Chitre's eyes gleam as he recites the chorus in his flat in Sahitya Sahawas, the writers' colony in Bandra. It was inevitable that Popat lose his beak, the *tamasha* lose its innocence and move from a traditional folk art to stylised cinema and finally to the complexities of experimental theatre. But what loss it sustains is our gain.

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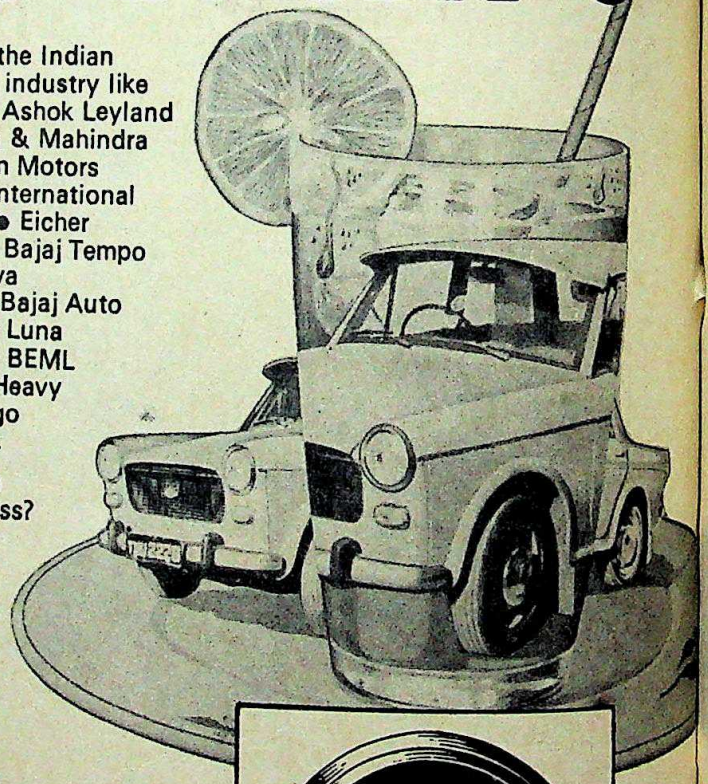
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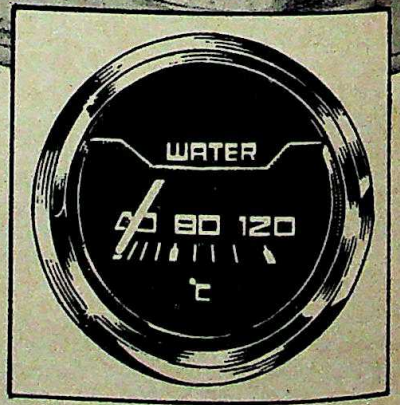
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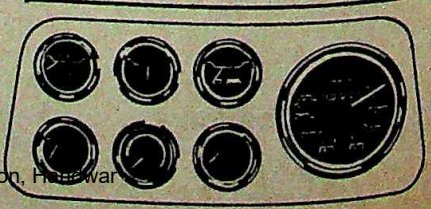
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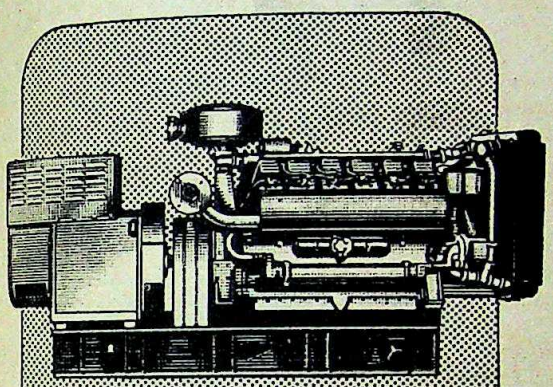
pricol: your third eye

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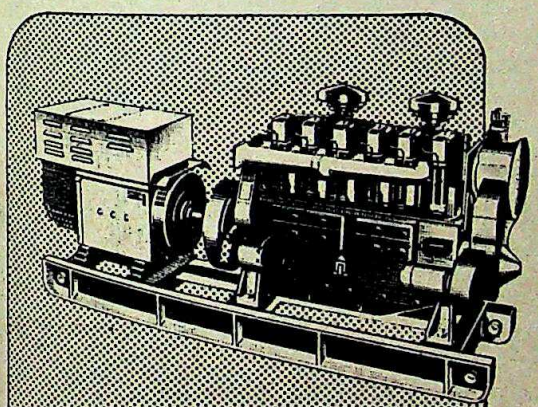
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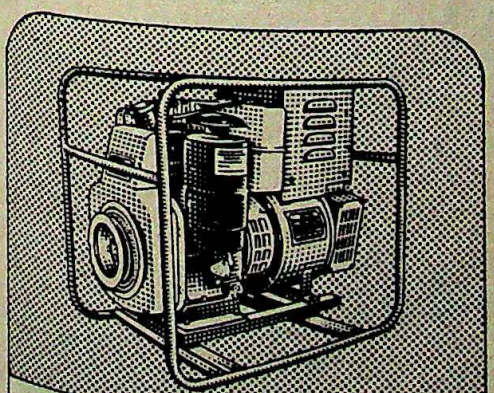
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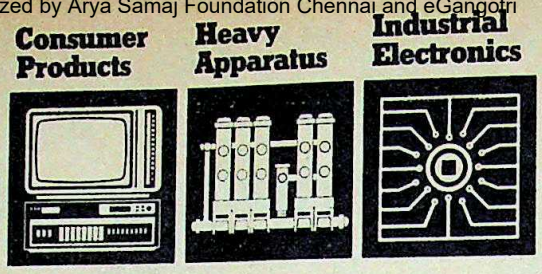
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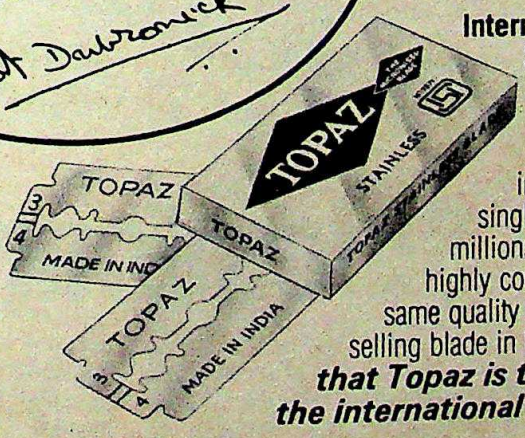
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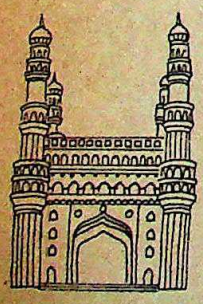
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PALACES OF HYDERABAD

Monumental Splendour



SOME habits die hard in old Hyderabad.

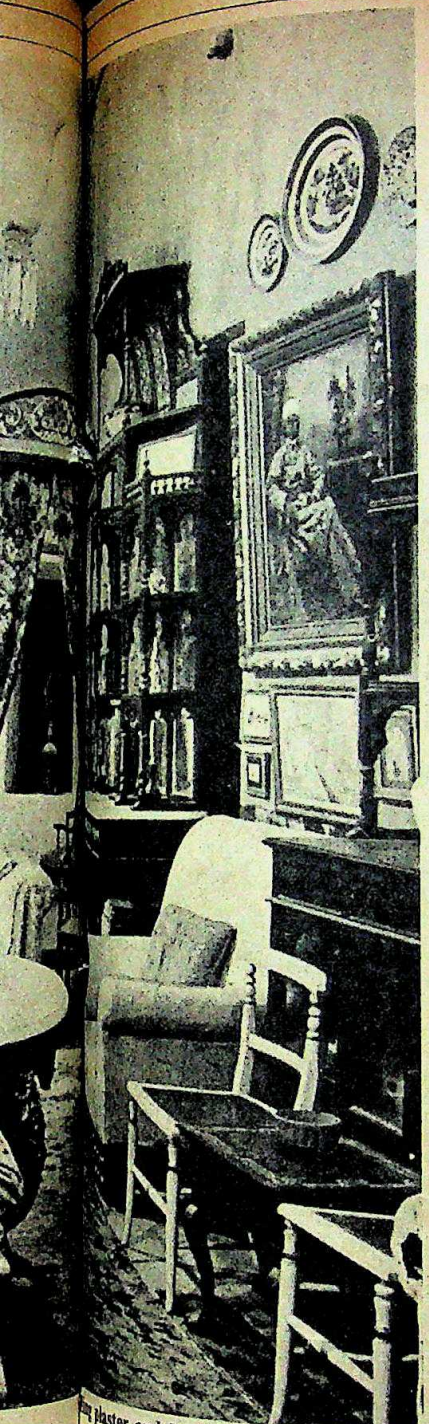
■ Zainulabiddin Khan the 69-year-old grandson of Itsam ul Mulk, a noble heading the private crown lands of the Nizam, awakes at the crack of dawn for his daily *namaz*. He then proceeds to feed the finches and fantail pigeons he keeps in cages before turning his attention to his three dachshunds and one fox-terrier. Pottering about in the quarter of the 50-room old palace called Aziz Manzil he now occupies, he sets about rearranging objects, occasionally sticking magazine pin-ups in old picture frames as substitutes for long-lost originals.

Donning his *sherwani* and cap he entertains visitors over tea: there is tall, kinsman whose fortunate daughter married a French Count; and of Osmania biscuits, especially named after the Nizam. "Don't they just melt in the mouth? Just absolutely melt?" he asks, patrician profile reinforced by its aristocratic nose.

■ Mir Moazam Husain, grandson of Fakhr ul Mulk, a legendary noble of

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...plaster and hunting trophies are not ...only remaining memories of old ...rabad: descendants of the Nizam's no... ...Zainulabiddin Khan (above) in his ...ng room at Aziz Manzil in Malakpet and ...am Husain (right) in his modern ...ra Hills Villa keep the tradition alive

...'s court known for his voracious ...e, no longer lives in the house he was ...n. It is called Iram Manzil, a 150-room ...-atop a hill, once set in a private estate ...acres. Instead, he has retired to a small ...beautiful villa in Banjara Hills after ...an international civil servant with the ...d Nations for 26 years.

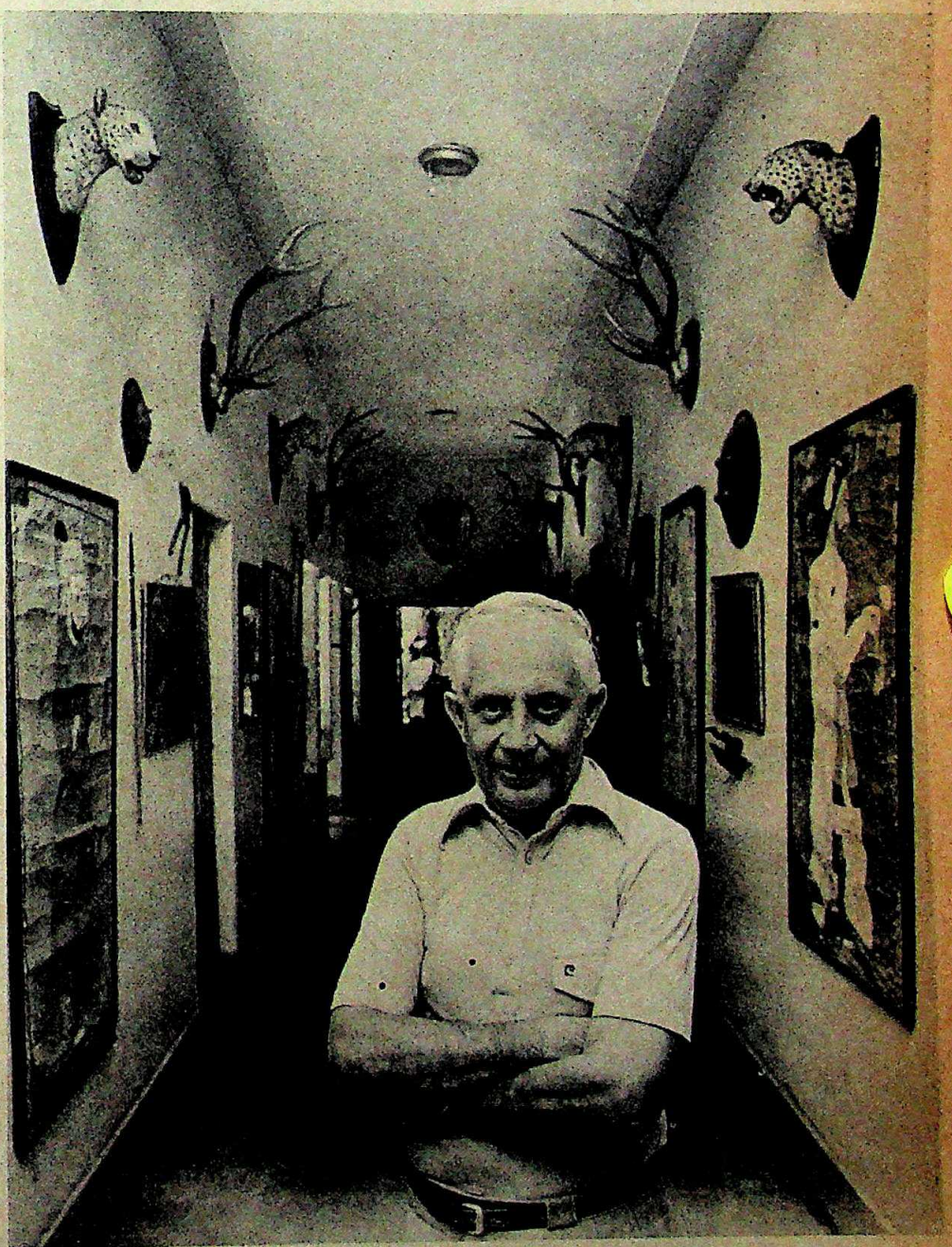
Here he devotes himself to landscaping his five acres into gardens and terraces adorned with lily pools, channels and waterfalls. Occasionally, he turns out elegant and witty discourses for the Golconda Society on subjects such as *Hyderabad : Then and Now*, bristling with quotations from Oscar Wilde, Francis Bacon, Themistocles, T.S. Eliot and Nizamat Jung—the last somewhat inadequately described as "a distinguished son of Hyderabad".

Husain's present concerns are his city's environment and the preservation of its architecture. But he is coolly analytical about why the world of old Hyderabad disintegrated so fast, how its sprawling aristocracy dissipated so easily: "Because they sat in their palaces here, totally out of touch with the people. They lacked a true love for the place, an attachment to the soil. A 200-year-old ethos just folded up. The blow was too stunning when the time for change came."

■ Indira Devi Dhanrajgir wakes up well after sunrise and prefers breakfast in bed: in a maginficent bed that, like all the furniture in her bedroom, is of painted Italian woodwork. As the eldest child of a family of financiers to successive Nizams of Hyderabad she occupies one wing of a fabulous and meticulously preserved house known as the Gyanbagh Palace.

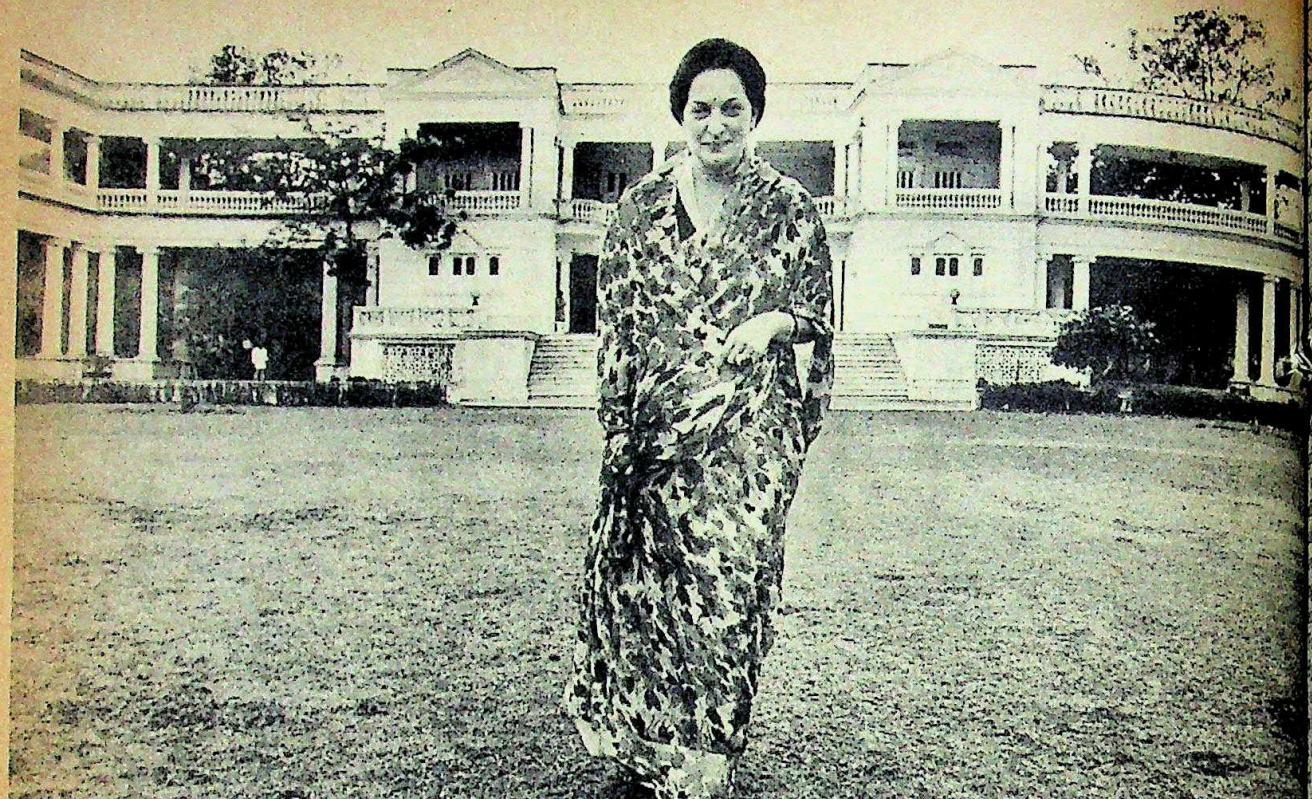
Granddaughter of Raja Narsinghgir who once loaned money for a railway to the sixth Nizam, she works hard to keep the family image afloat: three strings of pearls are clasped around her neck and an outsize amethyst ring nesting in diamonds glitters on her finger; her name in the telephone directory is to be found neither under "I" nor "D" but under "R" for Rajkumari.

Now married to a "renowned" Telugu



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Indira Dhanrajgir in the garden of the 22-suite palace her father built (above) and posing in its Louis XIV drawing room (below)



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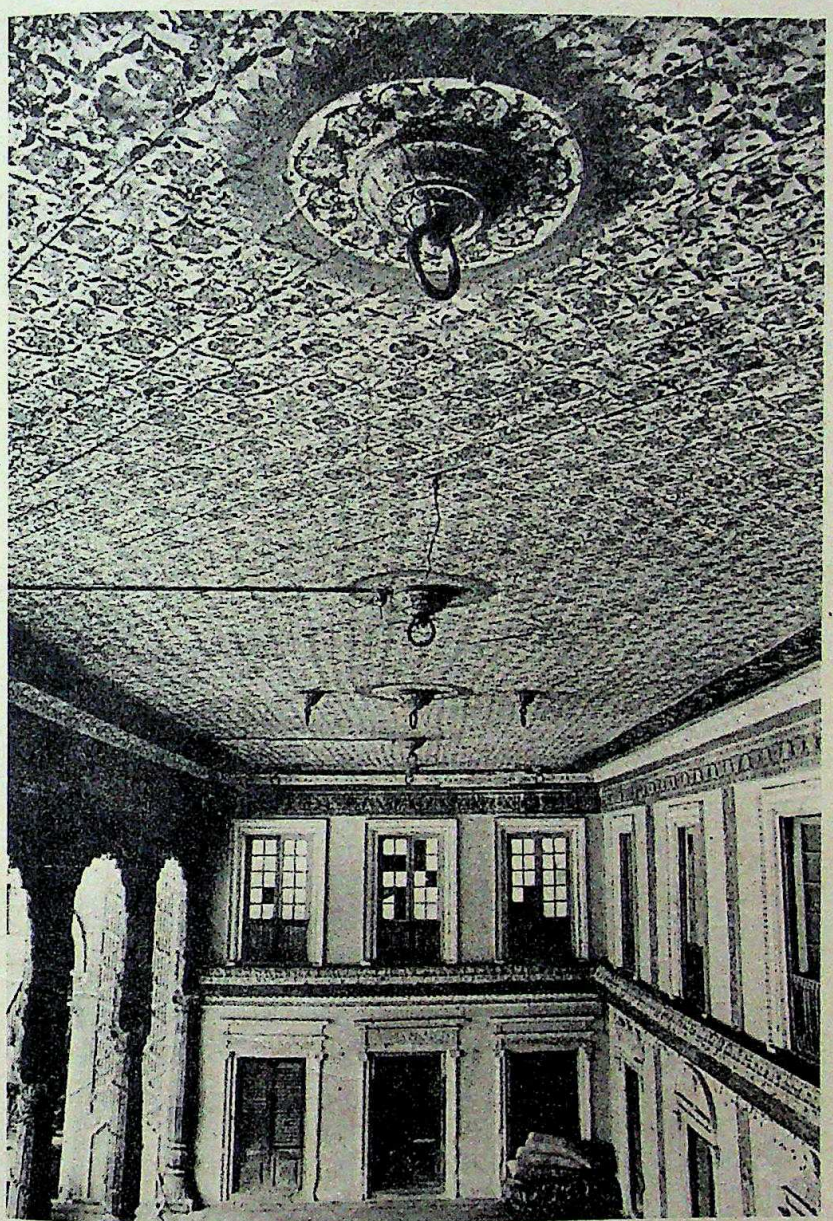
...chendra Sarma, her chief concerns ...ary not mercantile. She is president ...Andhra Pradesh Hindi Academy, ...poetry and criticism, and is grateful ...the ordinary people she doesn't have ...about things like paying house rent. ...the second richest family in the ...after the Nizam," she says, ...ressing the twin Sevres va- ...Salar Jung III ...a house-warming ...were the Rocke- ...Hyderabad."

...ories: These are ...figures from an- ...world who have con- ...to changing times. ...ses others in Hydera- ...in a twilight zone, ...out the present in ...ay recreation of the ...for them memories of ...derabad die hard. ...of these are still evi- ...the courtesy, the lan- ...the obsessive interest ...and drink. But most ...the hurly-burly of ...a state capital given ...by ministries and ...traffic jams, they are ...in the dream palaces ...ast.

...names of the pala- ...the period themselves ...the overreaching ...ons of the builders: ...the Aasman Mahal ...dity, Iram Manzil ...means "Paradise" ...Chashmuma which lite- ...translates to mean ...of the Sky". It was ...ir vision that bore ...from the preceding ...inside the city: few ...are remain today, the ...Dewan Ki Deori of ...Jungs having been ...to the ground along ...the original building ...housed the celebrated ...Of the remaining ...inside the city, the ...Palace with its fabulous lacquered ...and great, carved wooden pillars ...remains, falling gently to ruin in its ...status as a *shaadi ghar*.

...Resort: Iram Manzil which today ...state of shoddy disrepair—it houses ...government offices—was a self- ...little city-resort when it first erup- ...the scene. Planned with its private ...picnic spots, lake and polo grounds, its boundary wall stretched for miles; staffed by 927 retainers, its private dairy and hospital, its own police force, stables for 100 horses and garages for 20 cars, it was a miracle of administrative calm.

For all the glorious conveniences it contained, life inside the palace remained one of rigid protocol and formality; as a child Moazam Husain remembers having to present himself at a formal audience with his grandparents: "Chairs were laid out in strict order of precedence for each of my grandfather's sons, their wives and children for an hour each evening. If someone was not present his chair was simply left vacant. Dressed formally in *sherwanis* you salaamed as you entered and had to retrace your steps while exiting. You couldn't sit down till you were asked to, couldn't cross your legs and never spoke unless spoken to. Normally the daily audience was an exchange of family news and gossip. But sometimes grandfather didn't feel up to conversation. In which case he would raise an eyebrow in acknowledgement, mutter a blessing and go back to reading his *Illustrated London News*. While you just sat on in silence."



The richly-lacquered ceiling of the Malwalla Palace in the Charminar area now rented out as a *shaadi ghar*

Iram Manzil isn't the only stately home that today houses departments of the government, its great halls and reception rooms partitioned off into cubicles for secretaries and stenographers. Smaller private homes have been partitioned among the progeny of the great nobles: most of Aziz Manzil, for example, is given over to a trucking business. Begumpet Palace, close to the airport, once a grand residence built by Sir Vicar for his four sons has more or less been abandoned though it remains a private property. Its present owners prefer to live in a small outhouse which they have comfortably converted into a modern home. Says Ahmad Yar Khan, whose ancestors built the 125-room palace: "Even if we tried we couldn't maintain it. I suppose it will simply fall apart one of these days."

Others have compromised by letting the state Government take the buildings over: a few have been converted into state guesthouses, the rest into offices, schools or hospitals. The great collections of antiques and art objects have been slowly sold out. "We had to sell all our beautiful things that had been collected over seven generations," admits Zainulabiddin Khan, "to pay taxes and estate duties. The beautiful gilded Louis XIV furniture, the chandeliers, they're all gone. What you see here are the dregs."

In a city always celebrated for its architecture since the time of the Qutbshahi dynasty of Golconda, the last spurt of building activity began in the 1880s, taking its feverish tone from the ruler of the time. Mahbub Ali Pasha (1869-1911), the 6th Nizam, a character both divine and dissolute, sacred and profane, ascended the throne at the age of three and was dead at

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42. Yet in every respect he revolutionised turn-of-the-century Hyderabad, from altering court dress to promoting education.

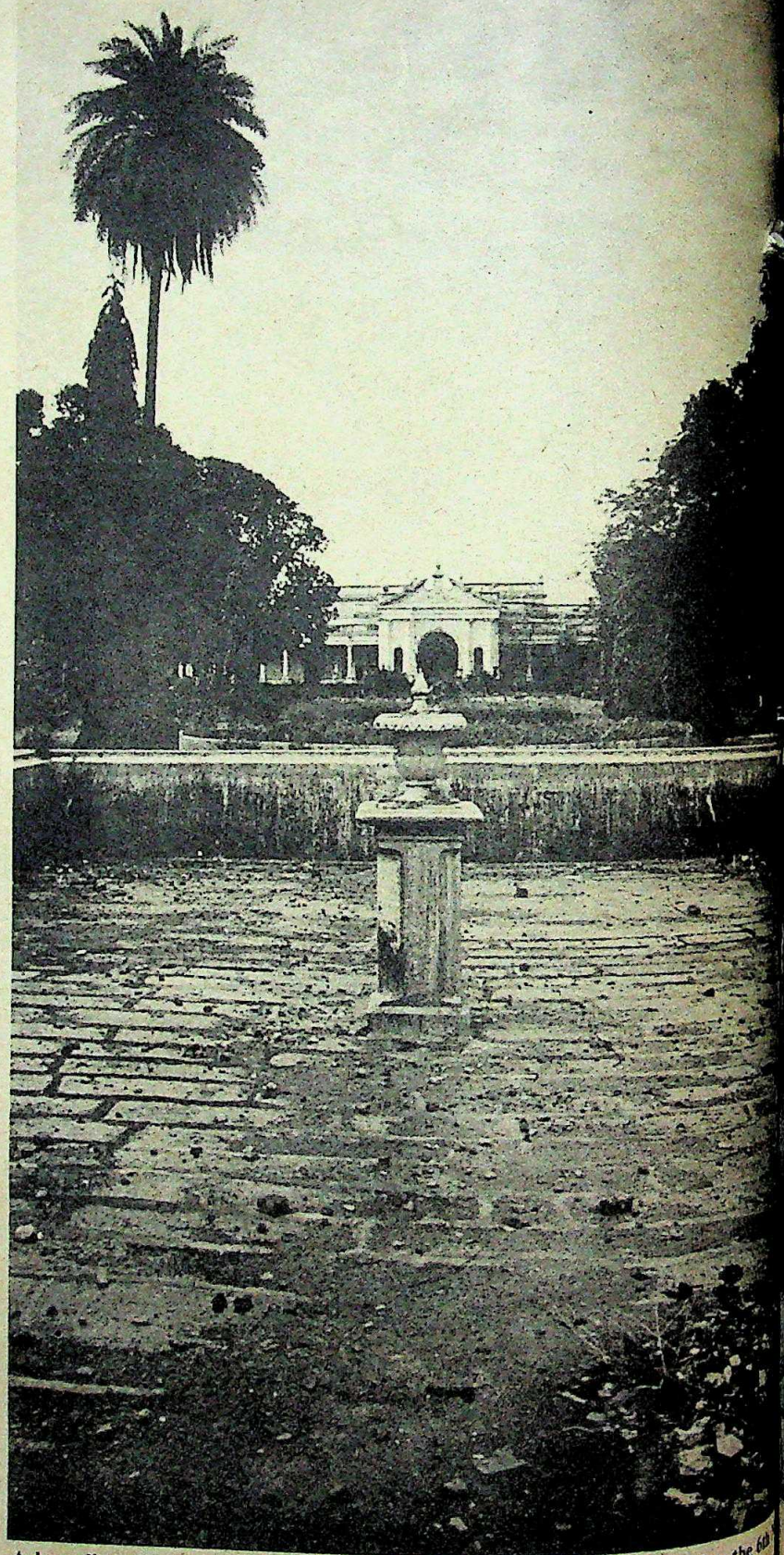
Fastidious Tastes: Although he chose to live in one of the city's older palaces—the Purani Haveli—he built large extensions in French style and undertook refurnishing it in heavily baroque fashion. A fastidious man in his personal tastes—he only wore French socks discarding each pair after he had worn it once—his sartorial extravagances were so great that he had built in his palace the longest wardrobe in the world. Visitors to Purani Haveli today can see the 240-foot-long, corridor-like chamber, reached by a hand-operated lift, that contains at least 150 walk-in closets with a gallery running round half-way to the ceiling. Mahbub Ali seldom liked to repeat his costume, or for that matter his accessories, some of which are still preserved: elegant, hand-made shoes and silk top hats slowly crumbling in moth-eaten boxes.



Mahbub Ali Pasha: divine and dissolute

For all his excesses, which included bouts of hard drinking, Mahbub himself built no new palaces. He simply acquired them after the wealthiest of his nobles established the edifices. Eminent among the builders of the period was his premier noble and sometime Dewan, Sir Vicar ul Umra.

Architectural Display: Sir Vicar, a man of as eclectic temperament as his ruler, is best remembered today as the builder of Hyderabad's most outstanding folly, the Falaknuma Palace. That was perhaps his



A long-distance view of the Purani Haveli, residence of Mahbub Ali Pasha, the 6th

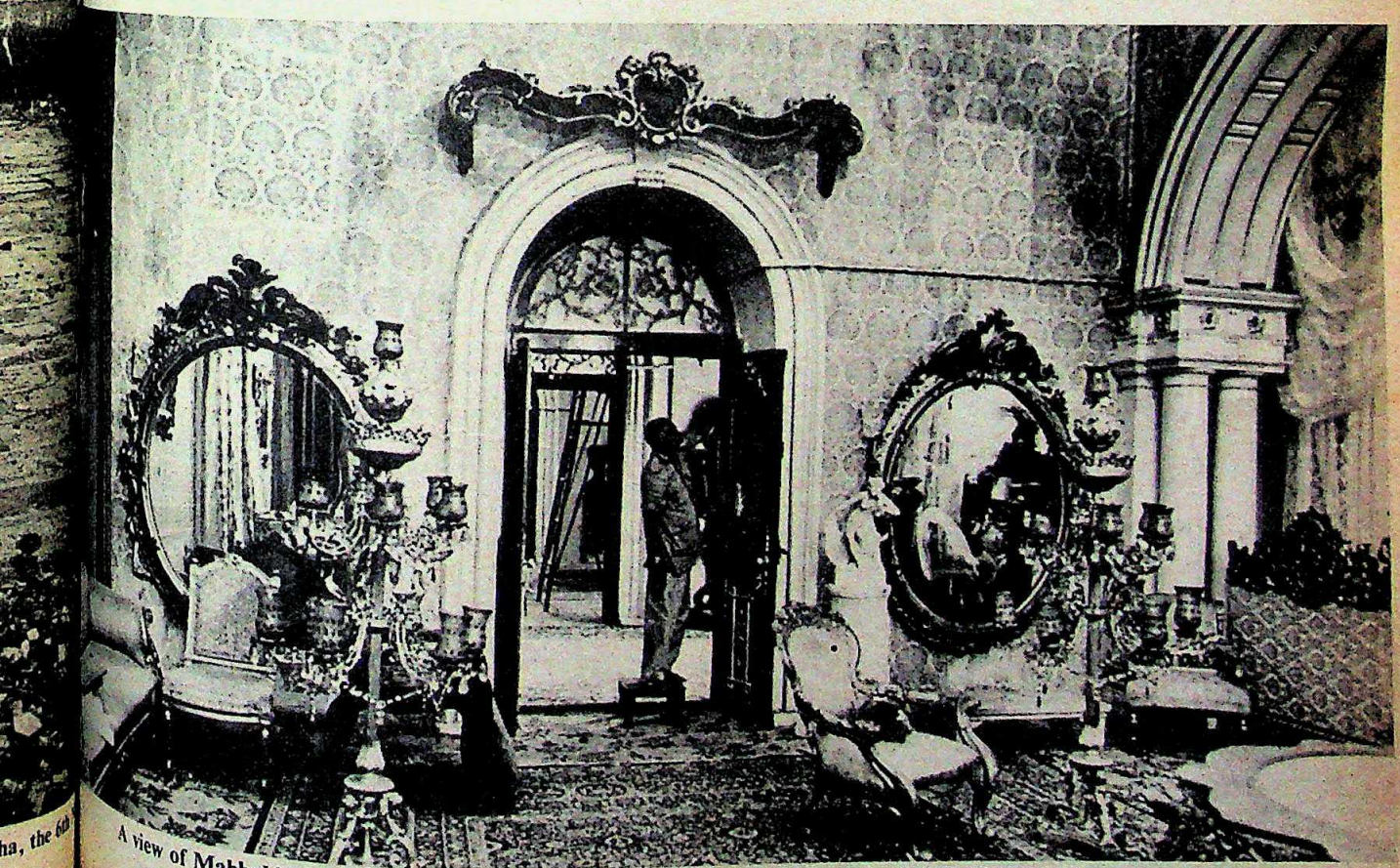


A view

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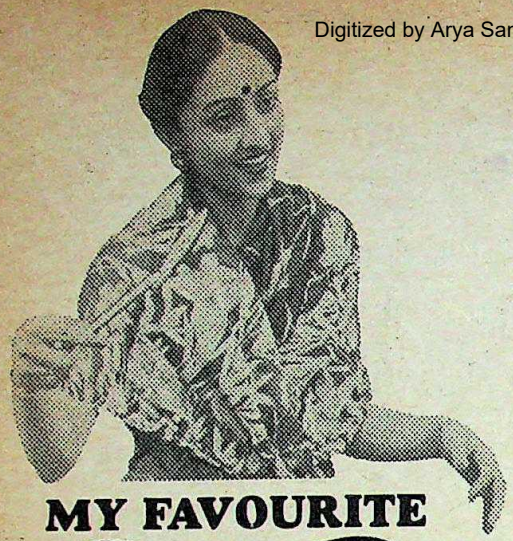


A view of Mahbub's wardrobe, the longest in the world, at Purani Haveli (top) and (above) a dressed version of his bedroom in his private apartment

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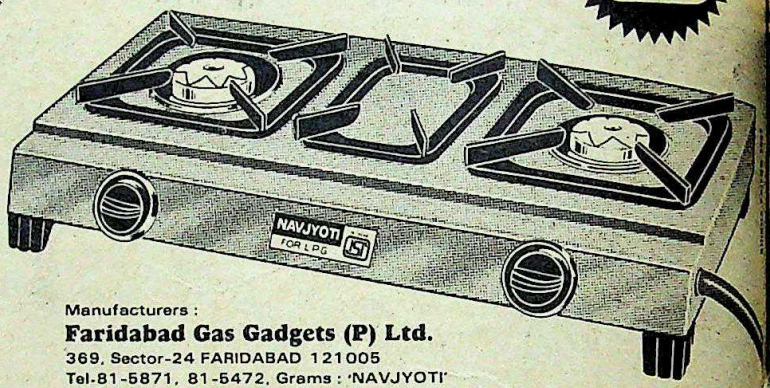
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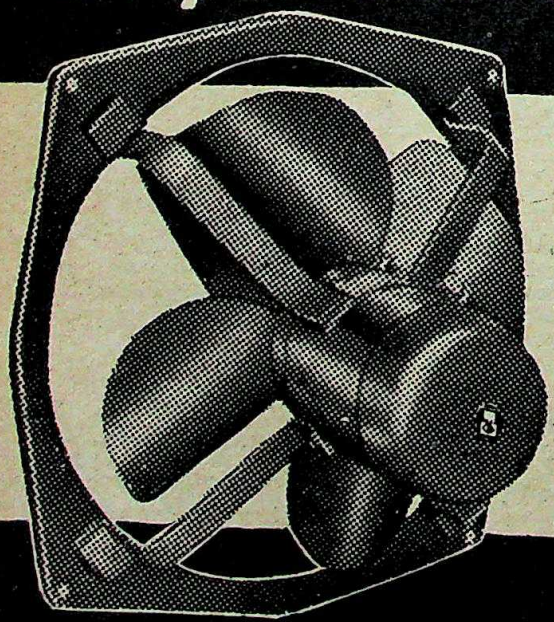
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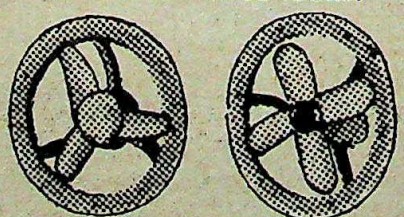
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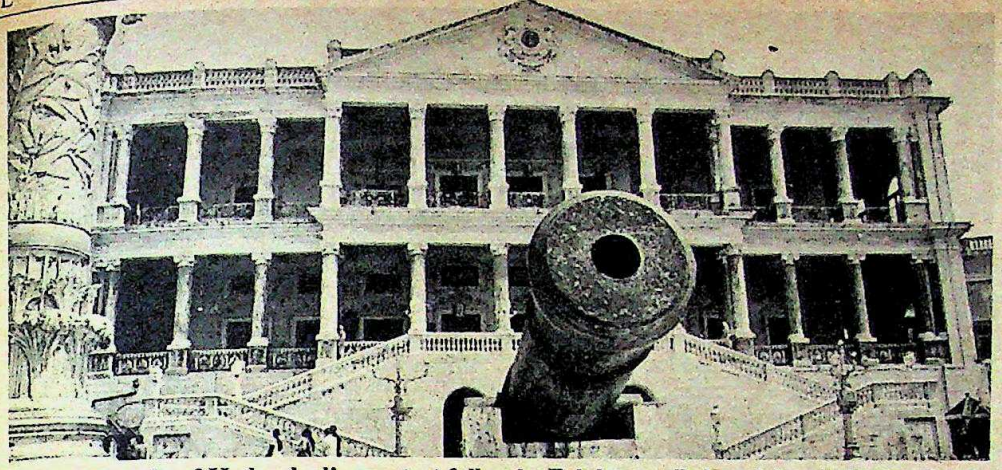
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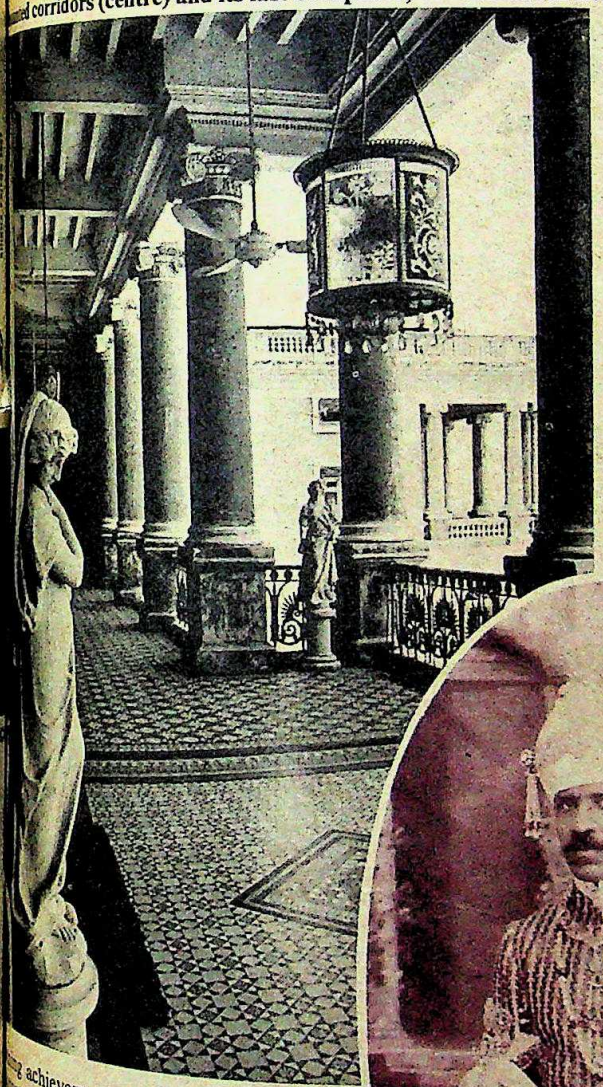


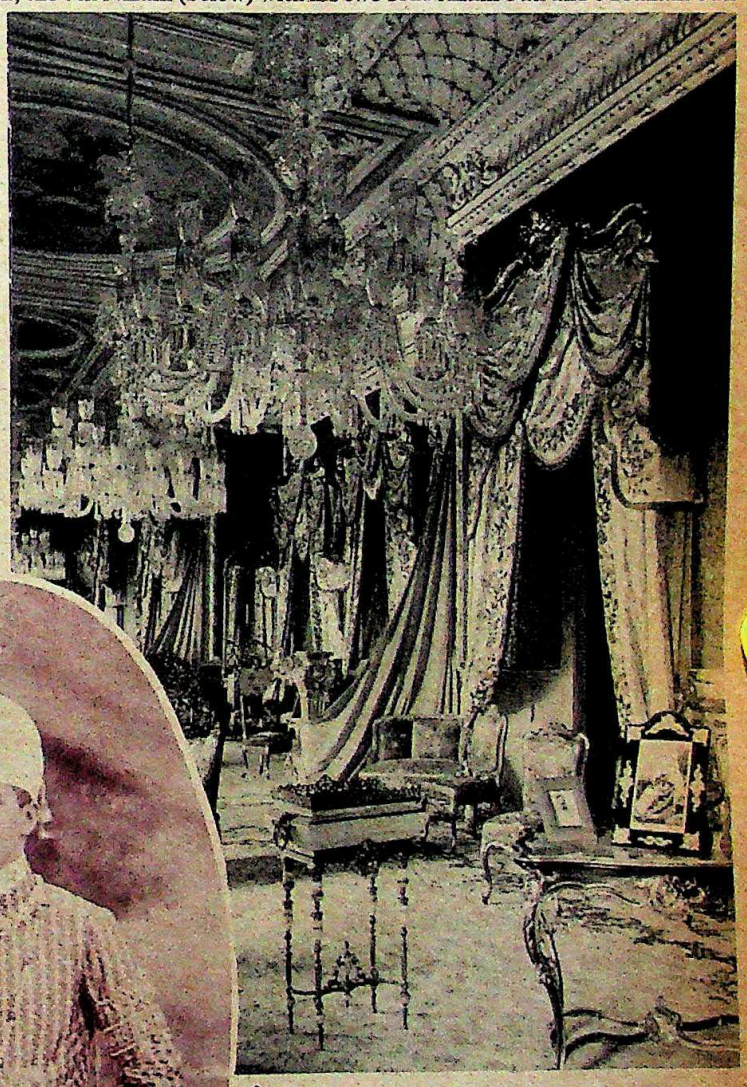
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The famous facade of Hyderabad's greatest folly, the Falaknuma Palace (above); its drawing room ...ed corridors (centre) and its last occupants; Sir Osman Ali Khan, the 7th Nizam (below) with his two sons Azam Jah and Moazam Jah







...g achievement, though it made him ...pt. Started in 1884 in a specially chosen ...on top of a hill, the Falaknuma was a ...g display of international skills: every ...oot of marble came from Carrara in Italy, ...e workmen tooled the leather ceiling ...great banquet-hall that seats a hundred ...while nuns from France worked the camel-...kestery.

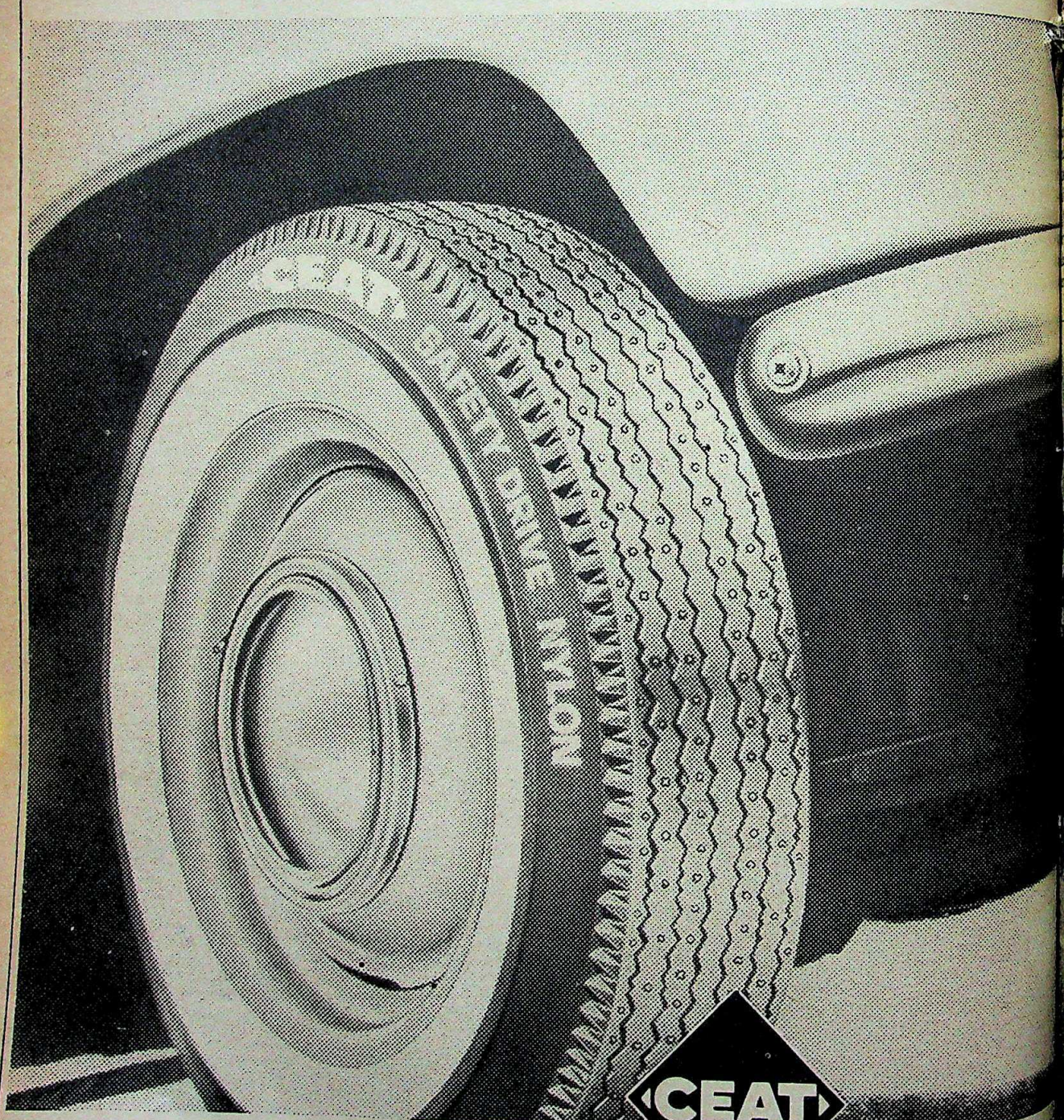
...pically, the magnificent palace was a hectic confusion of disparate Western styles. Victorian whatnots laden with French and German porcelain jostled with Italian statuary, French Empire-style furniture was arranged round rigidly English portraits. Elaborate crested gold and silver cutlery for endless courses were laid out along with monogrammed china, while liveried coachmen waited outside the fabulous palace facade. Sir Vicar lived at the Falaknuma in grand style, entertaining visiting European royalty and

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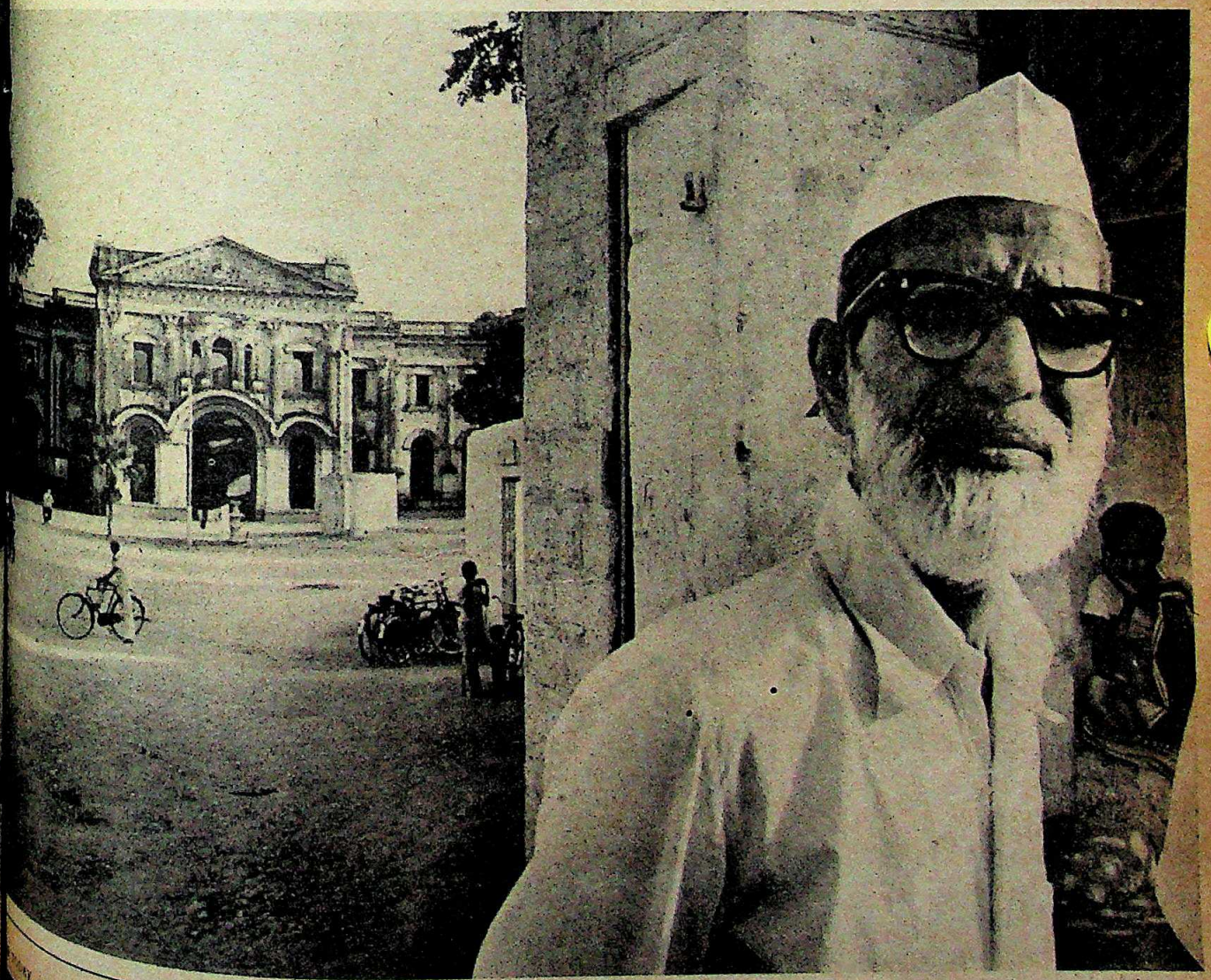
...s but not for long.
...1895 Mahbub Ali happened to visit
...Falaknuma along with a few of his
...ladies for a couple of days.
...ased with the residence, he kept extend-
...his stay—till it became clear to Sir Vicar
...ul Mulk ruler fancied the Falaknuma greatly.
...mediate response he offered it to
...b Ali as a *nazar*, the customary
...g presented by all nobles to their ruler.
...b Ali accepted part of the palace as
...ad paid up in cash for the rest, and
...how the Falaknuma came to belong
...ams of Hyderabad.
...ny of the old properties are also
...by protracted family litigations and
...e. It is ironic that not one among the
...ese stately homes has been preserved
...e form of a hotel or museum.
...rtunately we don't have the equivalent
...ational Trust that in Britain pays to
...e old buildings. And even if we did I
...t if it would work in a city like
...ched: many of the old families might misconstrue it as an invasion of not just their privacy but their family honour," says Moazam Husain.

Understandably, for a man as public-spirited and self-denying, Osman Ali Khan's tenure was not renowned for building yet more stately homes. With the exception of King Kothi, a complex of royal residences that he built, Hyderabad's great palace-building days were over. Today, part of King Kothi has been converted into a hospital, the main hall known as Osmania Mansion resembles a bombed-out shell of the original, and Nazri Bagh which constituted the Nizam's living apartments is locked up and seldom opened. Osman Ali's two sons also built a series of private homes, but on a smaller, modern scale.

Those who have tried to maintain a semblance of the old style have managed only because of the careful commercial investments made by their forefathers. Indira Dhanrajgir, who occupies only one wing of the Gyanbagh Palace, says she requires a minimum of eight servants to keep it going: "A cook, a bearer, an ayah and sweeper, plus four underservants like gardeners but it's not easy. We've had to sell much of the land that surrounded the palace."

The Falaknuma and the Chowmahalla alone of the great palaces remain private properties of the present Nizam, Mukarram Jah, who lives in Australia. The Purani Haveli has been made into an educational trust and, lately, has been loaned out as a film set. Proposals to convert the Falaknuma into a hotel or a museum have come to nothing; barely maintained by the few remaining retainers from days past, the palace is slowly going to seed. As the plaster peels off its fabled facade, dust settles thick on its magnificent chandeliers, and the rich brocade tapestries hang in tatters, there are those among Hyderabad's vanishing aristocrats who can only moan the raw deal history has dealt them. "For us," says Zainulabiddin Khan, "1947 was a little bit like the French Revolution." —SUNIL SETHI

An old retainer outside a dilapidated section of King Kothi: looking into the past

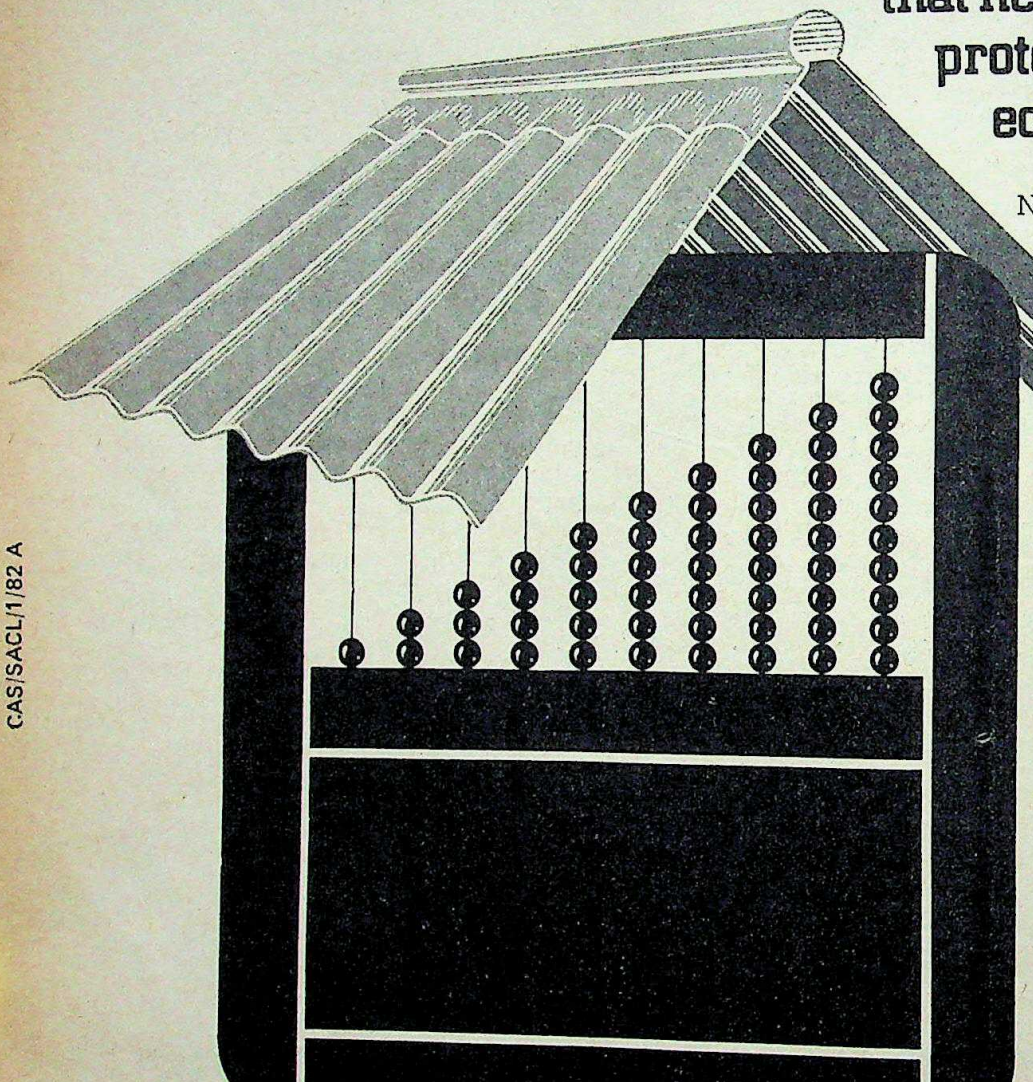


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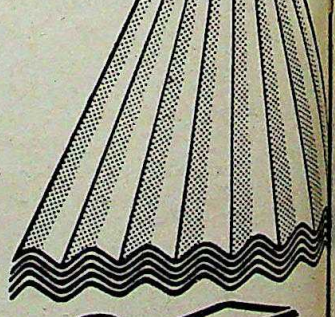
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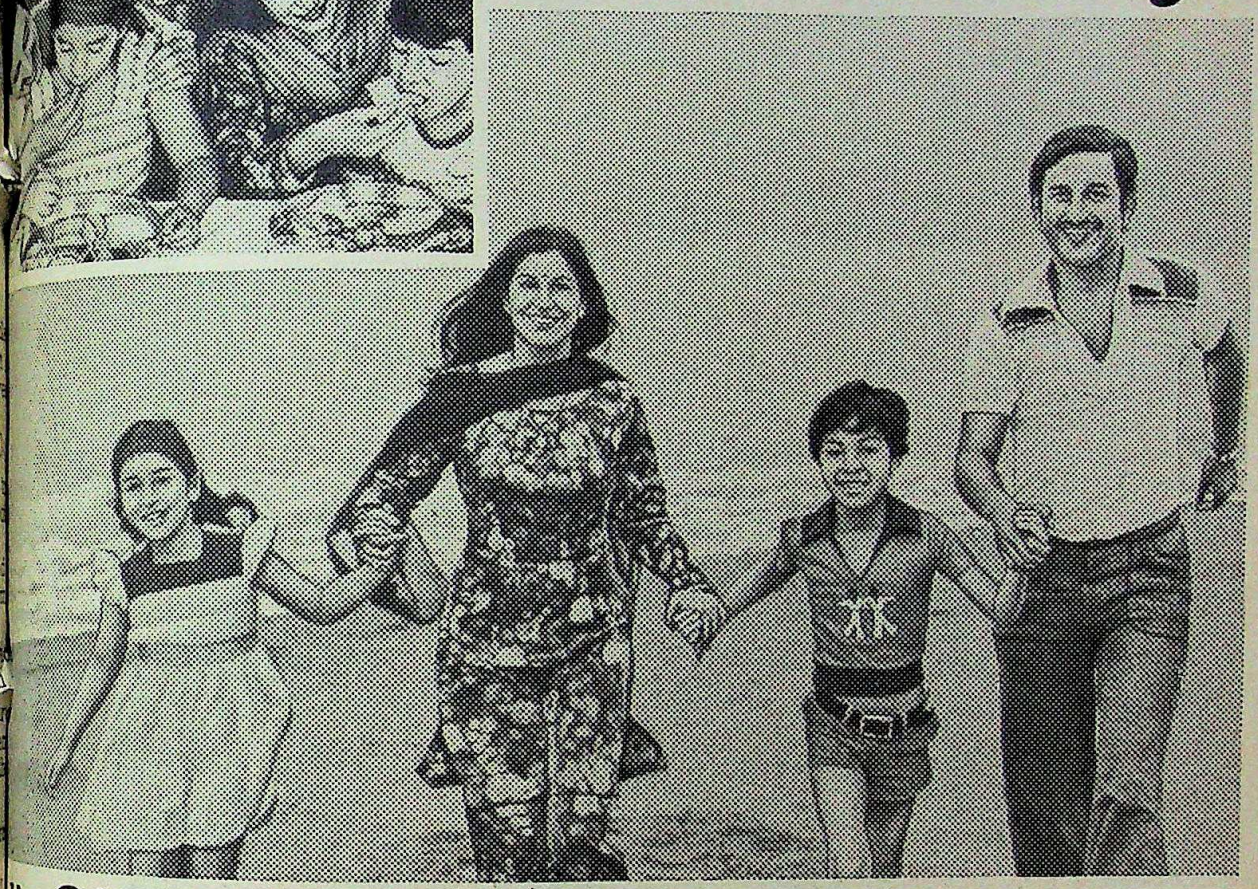
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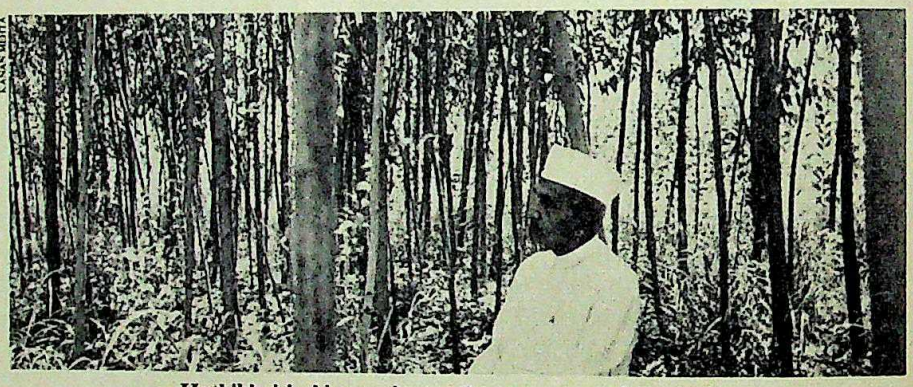
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GUJARAT

Taking To The Trees

CULTIVATION of traditional crops in Gujarat has given way to the highly profitable cultivation of eucalyptus trees. Farmers who made the switch two years ago are now reaping a rich harvest. While foodgrains fetch an annual profit of Rs 2,000 per acre, the trees which in two to three years grow to over 50 ft yield, at a minimum, Rs 75,000 every five years (roughly Rs 1,200 a month) per acre. Tree farming also cuts down on overheads like labour, fertilisers and insecticides. Almost 2,500 farmers have switched to full-scale tree farming and another 7,000 are doing it on a smaller scale in the districts of Kutch, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha and Mehsana.

Two years ago Amtabhai Patel, 48, a farmer of Panolcampa village in Idar taluka planted thousands of eucalyptus trees on his 14-acre farm where he used to grow cotton. His four brothers who share, between them, 60 acres have all taken to tree farming. Explaining the switch, he said: "Cotton cultivation is very costly. When one can make easy money by tree farming, why should one sweat cultivating foodgrains and cash crops?" Even then, Patel, like many others, has not given up cotton farming. He continues to grow cotton plants in between the trees. With about 1,500 trees planted on an acre, Patel will make atleast Rs 10,50,000 in another three years.



Hathibhai in his eucalyptus farm: a successful switch

Eucalyptus seedlings are being distributed freely by the Forest Department to farmers, village panchayats, schools and individuals. In 1981, as many as 15 crore seedlings were distributed in the state. Of them, 65 per cent are estimated to have survived. In fact, the demand for seedlings is often so high that the Forest Department is unable to cope with it.

Increased Demand: To meet this increasing demand, the Forest Department has started encouraging schools to set up nurseries which will be tended by students. These are then brought by the Government at 15 paise each. This programme will help schools make some money, create awareness among students on the importance of forests and also help the Forest Department supply farmers. About 300 schools in the state have already set up nurseries to grow eucalyptus seedlings and more will follow.

With this new trend however, planners may be faced with another crisis. Within a couple of years, food production in the state could well plunge to an all-time low. Says Hathibhai Patel, 70, a farmer of Bajpuracampa in Idar: "The Government will soon have to import foodgrains as we are all going to take up tree farming. A day will soon come when the Government will have to throw numerous incentives to farmers to encourage paddy cultivation. Patel has planted trees on 13 of his 38 acres. "Within two years, all 38 acres will be full of trees," he says; for the last 31 years, he has been cultivating wheat and cotton.

At this juncture, only prosperous farmers who can afford to wait for three to four years, have taken to tree farming in a big way. Small farmers have started planting trees on the borders of their holdings. But thanks to the economics of tree farming, the earnings of these farmers should increase appreciably.

Limited Role: This trend has been one of the most spectacular successes of the Forest Department which till 1970 played a very limited role—looking after existing forests. The Government too, looked upon forests solely as a source of revenue. Since 1971, however, the concept of social forestry has gained ground. The programme works by creating an awareness about the importance of forestry and by involving the community in forestry programmes.

In the process, it facilitates the setting up of a permanent programme for the reforestation of denuded forests and creating small plantations in villages which can supplement the fuel and timber needs of the villagers. Says Conservator of forests G.R. Karnick, of the Indian Forest Service (IFS): "Foresters can no more sit in their log cabins with binoculars. We have to reach out to the people as only they can help us re... forests. Forest officials have no... like missionaries; otherwise our ... never be done."

The viewpoint is substantiat... grim situation in the district of Sab... About 40 years ago this area w... with trees. The hillocks all over t... had dense forests full of wildlife. T... hillocks are bald and the top soil ... washed away. On the mountains, ... granite rocks remain. Motibhai ... 101-year-old resident of Idar in ... kantha district remembers ... used to roam in the beautiful co... and stray into the thick forests on...

Optimistic: The Forest Depart... started planting trees over num... locks. Since last year, they have pla... on 60 hillocks; hundreds remain. T... is enormous, but forest officials are ... tic as the World Bank has forwarde... of Rs 31.37 crore to Gujarat for the ... ment of fore... grant, which ... utilised betw... 85 includes ... planting, tre... tion in villa... setting up of ... ies. Forest ... have quite a ... ahead: they ... bring 1,05,4... es in Gujara... the shade ... Presently, o... hectares are ... Village ...

yats in the state have been very co... to the pleas of the Forest De... Panchayat leaders are usually sus... forest officials and hesitate to speak ... Although most villages have ban... they are not willing to allow th... Department to plant trees on it. Th... the fact that 50 per cent of the pro... the plantation go to the panchay... however, about 1,200 villages have ... give land to set up a small tree pl... These villages are all set to make a ...

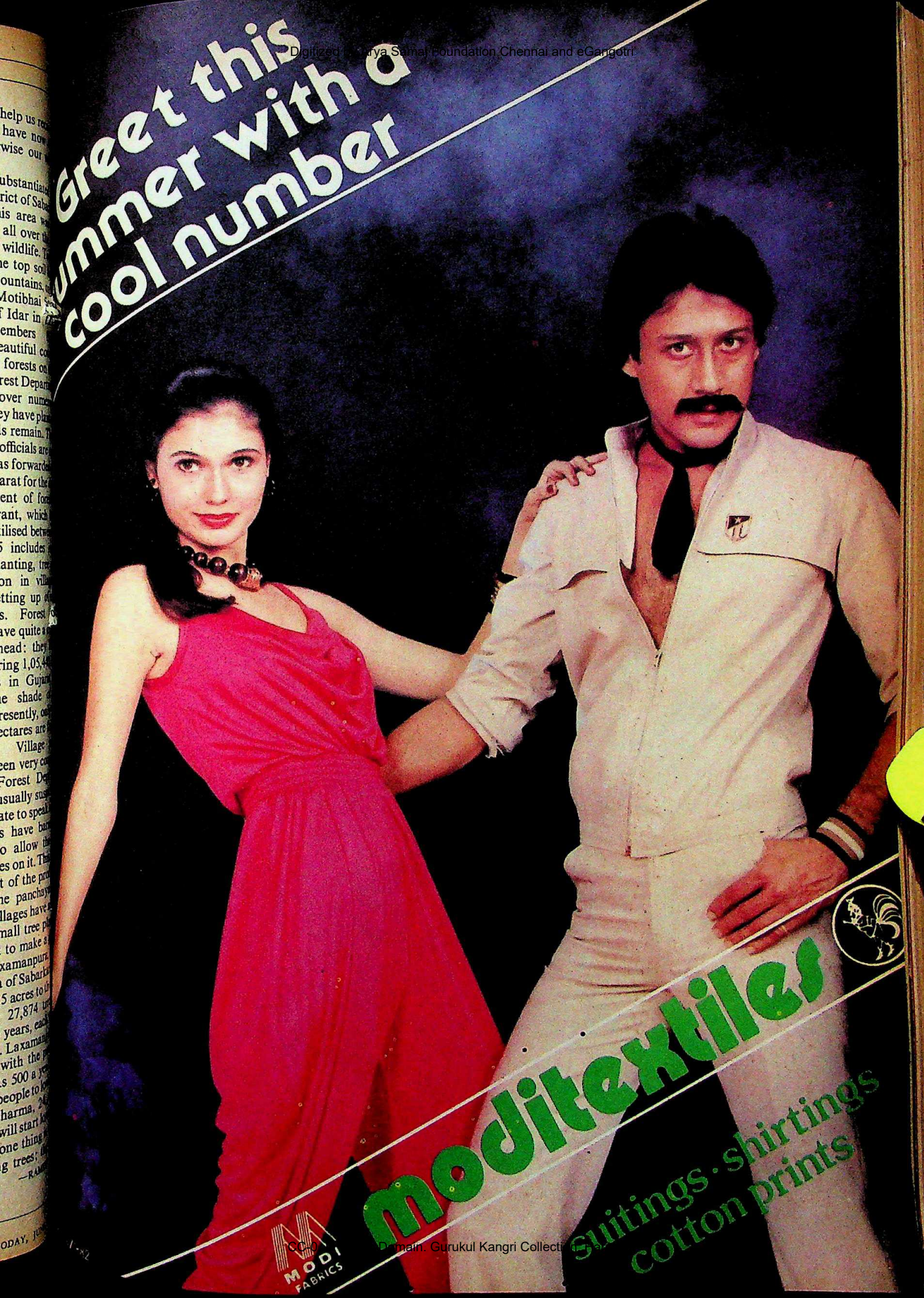
One of them is Laxamanpura ... village in Bhiloda taluka of Sabarka... Gram Panchayat gave 55 acres to th... Department on which 27,874 tre... planted. In another two years, each ... fetch at least Rs 75 each. Laxaman... extremely poor village with the p... earning an income of Rs 500 a ye...

"We have to teach people to ... says Ashwini Kumar Sharma, 26, ... officer. Whether people will start ... remains to be seen but one thing ... people will love growing trees; ... are far too tempting.

—RA...

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Dattaram-NP

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Salty Problem

...r, once the pep behind political ...ions in Gujarat, is now an item ...ke smugglers' list in the state with ...e the Adivasi-populated Broach ...ving been banned from June 5. ...: an unsightly scourge, goitre, ...: at least three out of every 10 persons ...ct.

...ease is caused by a nutritional ...The human body requires about a ...of iodine a day; but if that is ...e thyroid gland in the front of the ...s to swell and a person develops ...nd crippling goitre—a disease ...infants into morons and makes ...y.

...medy is simple: a touch of iodine ...ch of salt is a sure protection, as the ...ensured of its daily need of the ...So the distribution of iodine-...alt is the safest way to combat the ...ecting an estimated 40 million in ...y. Although it calls for only mak-...ide iodised salt in place of common ...the National Goitre Control ...me (NGCP) launched in 1959 is ha-...g an impact.

...backs: The NGCP is symptomatic ...official apathy in tackling major ...al problems as exemplified in the ...the vitamin A prophylaxis pro-...against blindness. Even the plans ...cing iodised salt are ill-formed. ...t the 12 iodisation plants have a ...of 3,60,000 tonnes, the plants pro-...than 1,50,000 tonnes as against an ...demand of 7,00,000 tonnes. Union ...Ministry sources say that apart from ...breakdown of the iodisation plants, the ...of gunny bags and closed railway ...to carry it to endemic areas are ...for the poor performance.

There are plans to set up 15 more plants by 1985, of which 12 are to be in the north-eastern states, as the Himalayan foothills are highly endemic. In fact the highest degree of prevalence recorded in the NGCP surveys was 68.6 per cent in Mizoram just four years ago.

With all these drawbacks, Broach indeed seems fortunately placed in that iodised salt is made within the state at Khargoda. But the biggest hurdle to be overcome here is illegal sale of common salt. Expectedly, the salt manufacturers in the district are not too happy about the ban. There are no supporters among them for the Government proposal to distribute and even manufacture iodised salt. They are confident of finding markets for the common salt elsewhere in the state. Some unscrupulous ones are certain of finding these within the district itself.

Distribution: The state Government is planning to distribute iodised salt in Broach through the state Civil Supplies Corporation. The district needs 7,500 tonnes of iodised salt a year. But with its price yet to be fixed it is not likely to reach all retailers. Emphasises the Director of Medical and Health Services O.P. Gupta: "We are trying to make iodised salt available at cheaper rates so that the poor do not feel tempted to buy common salt." While some officials feel the date for imposing the ban on the sale of common salt should be put off, the Gujarat Health Minister Manohar Singh Jadeja says: "The question of the programme not succeeding will not arise as the ban will be imposed in very strict terms."

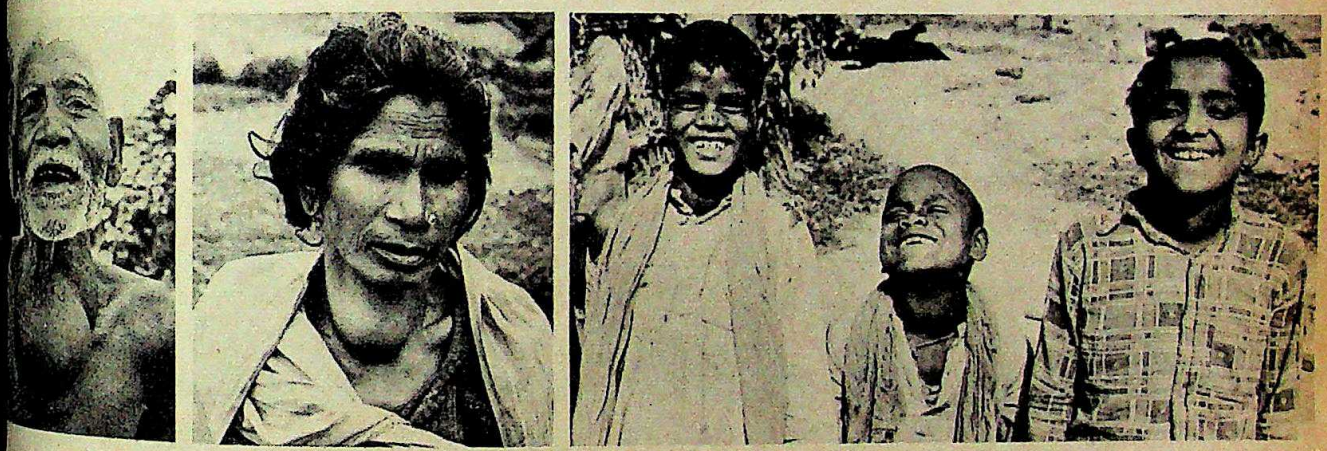
The NGCP experience in some other states shows that distribution of the iodised salt is the biggest hurdle. Official reviews show iodised salt is not lifted on one pretext or another (common in trade practices) and cheaper common salt is smuggled in for distribution in its place. After all, profit margins are the only consideration for those in the distribution chain. What is worse, health officials in Broach are yet to inform the people about the switch and make them aware of the value of iodised salt. Even an alert buyer can be misled, for iodised salt does not look or taste different from common salt, the only distinguishing feature being, perhaps, the packaging.

Problems: Last year Union Health Minister B. Shankaranand wrote to chief ministers of 17 states to lend personal support for the NGCP and set up goitre cells in the health directorates. He offered to supply iodisation plants and the iodine required for mixing with common salt from the central stocks and suggested that the states pay for the staff manning such plants and the distribution network. This did not evoke a bright response, for as one Health Ministry official points out: "The states shy away because the public distribution system is not effective enough."

Meanwhile, there are no firm indications as to whether the prevalence of goitre in the endemic areas is on the rise or decline. The NGCP is understaffed and is unable to resurvey the areas. Another factor that makes it difficult to note changing trends is the poor reporting of the incidence by victims at rural health centres. In the first stage, the disease occurs with a scarcely noticeable swelling of the thyroid gland, though this can be detected by touch. Because the swelling itself does not cause any pain, victims tend not to bother with it even though it hampers their swallowing.

The supreme irony is that in Shahdol and Sidhi districts of Madhya Pradesh girls with goitre are preferred as brides over others not so afflicted. As one nutrionist says: "If the goitre is treated as a cosmetic problem of one kind or another it will become a persistent pain in the neck of health service programme."

—AMARNATH K. MENON with RAMESH MENON



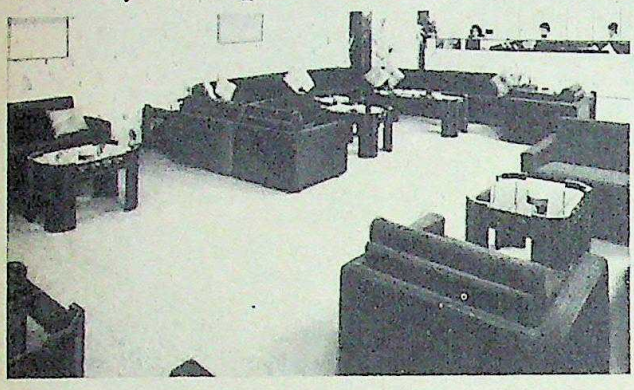
Adivasis afflicted by goitre: crippled by official apathy

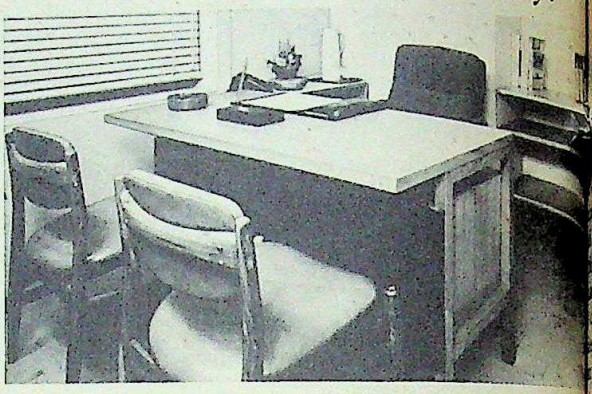
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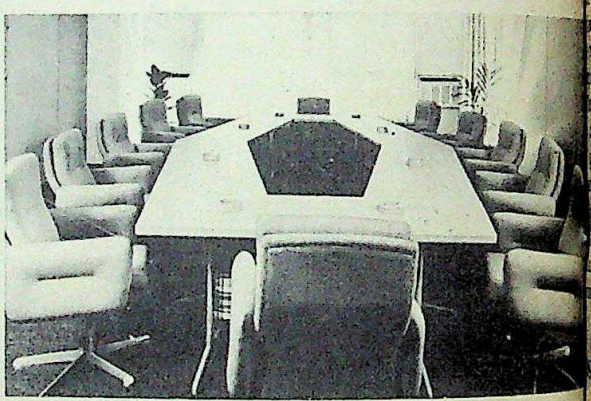
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SHORTENING THE SAIL?

IS THE Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) about to be restructured again? SAIL officials fear that major moves in this direction are on the cards. The effort may be to deny SAIL its intended role as a holding company for all the public sector steel units. The first steps in this direction have already been taken by forming separate companies for the Vishakhapatnam and Daitari steel projects, thus taking them outside SAIL's purview. SAIL officials say the Government wants to prevent steel executives from becoming too powerful *vis-a-vis* the Steel Ministry, and that balkanising the industry will give the ministry a more direct say in the running of the various steel plants.

RFECT PRODUCT

Auto Ltd. has developed the perfect product: a mini-rcycle that has brought in a fortune even before sales have The company has collected Rs 57 crore as deposits from 11 lakh bookings for its new M-50 mini-motorcycle. In one year's sales of the new two-wheeler will fetch less than crore. Such advance deposits were at one stage usually with the post office savings bank. But this time the is keeping the money, and intends to pay 9 per cent the deposits—barely half what it would have to pay a equivalent loan. The saving on interest alone runs into rupees, at a time when most companies are reeling under of the credit squeeze.

company says the 11 lakh waiting list for the M-50 reflects nfidence in the new vehicle. But much of the demand ite artificial, and fired only by the hope of booking on the vehicles when delivered. A grain merchant from velled to Nagpur to buy 30 application forms, an orange m Tumsar in Maharashtra bought 23 forms, and the son pur sugar baron got four forms. Market circles report other cases of multiple bookings.

LY ERROR

ER the cancellation of the Daitari steel plant contract with y McKee, it is the turn of the Rihand super-thermal power run into trouble. The contract for the power plant and the d coal mine was to go to a British consortium led by the Engineering Industries (NEI). But the deal that has been only for the power plant. The coal mine contract has fallen because NEI wanted a 12 per cent technical consultancy fee, the Government was not willing to give more than 0.5 per eventually lowered its demand to 7 per cent, but the ent's upper limit was 1 per cent. NEI also quoted prices well in excess of competitive global rates, on the assumption that the Government would bite of the aid offered as part of the package.

the failure to come to an agreement, the Government ork with the contract for a power station, but with no programme to develop a coal mine that will feed the power plant. Since the Sixth Plan does not provide money for investment in a coal mine linked to the Rihand power project, it seems inevitable that the Government will now launch a desperate hunt for other partners who can do the job as well as provide the money.

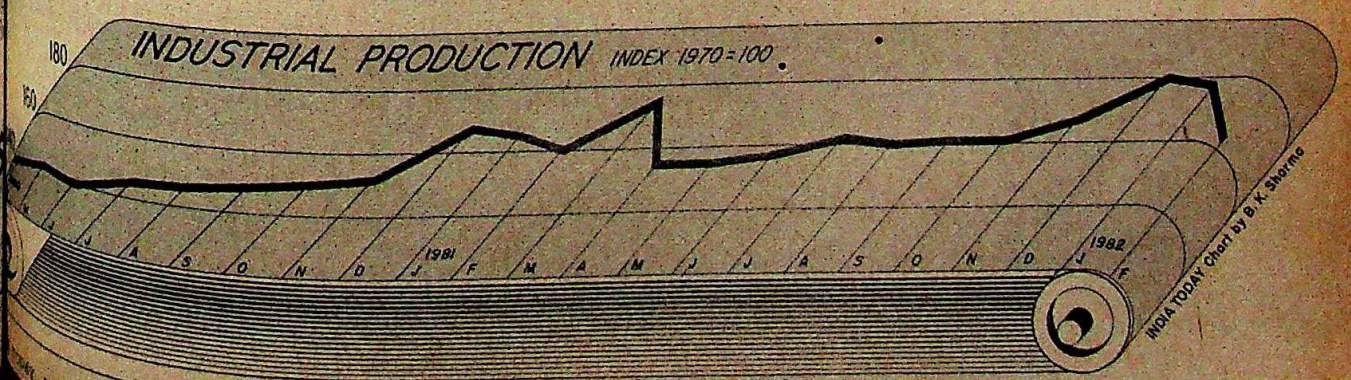
ROOM FOR MORE

THOUGH the credit situation remains tight, things may ease soon for exporters, with the Commerce Ministry pressing for a de-linking of export credit from the domestic credit squeeze. The Reserve Bank and the Finance Ministry are reportedly inclined to concede ground here because of the paramount need to boost the export effort. As a subsequent measure, the Government is also likely to extend the period of pre-shipment and post-shipment credit from the present ceiling of 90 days to 120 days, and in some cases to 180 days.

These measures are seen as essential if the current year's tentative export target of Rs 8,600 crore is to be met. Last year, exports were at Rs 7,500 crore, substantially short of the Rs 8,400 crore target. But the Government interprets the 12 per cent growth from the previous year's level of Rs 6,700 crore as a positive sign, since this was achieved in a period when global trade registered an absolute decline. In the previous year also the 3.9 per cent increase in India's exports compared favourably with the 1.5 per cent increase in global trade.

THE UNPRODUCTIVITY YEAR?

THE DEMAND recession has begun to reflect itself in the monthly industrial production index, which came down from 180.9 in December to 178.6 in January and further to 165.9 in February. A part of this slump can be explained away as seasonal, but the sharp drop in the February index is to a large extent a reflection of the Bombay textile strike and the production cutbacks reported by a wide range of other industries. The monthly industrial growth rate, as a consequence, is down from 7.3 per cent in January (over the corresponding month of 1981) to 2.9 per cent in February: certainly a poor start to the productivity year.



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FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Knocking At The Door

"YOU ARE a sucker if you invest in India. But you are a bigger one if you don't." This is how British and American businessmen with an eye on the Indian market teased one another when they visited Udyog Bhavan in the early '60s to sign on the dotted line. Most of them have done very well during the last 20 years, though nearly all of them feel they could have done even better but—and there are always 'buts' and 'howevers' in all such conversations—for all those controls and regulations. Most of the controls are still in force and, from the look of it, will continue to be in force for the next 20 years; but the Indian bureaucratic—and business—eye has a mental scanner which knows how to cut through the paperwork and yet keep everybody happy.

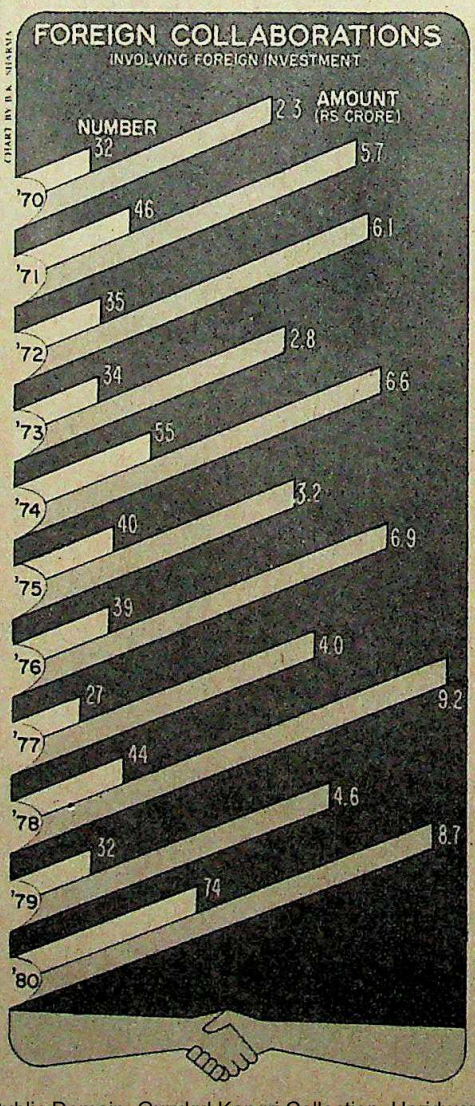
Foreign businessmen have also acquired this third sense when dealing with India. Suckers or otherwise, they keep on coming, hoping that one day or another they will land a big deal. One reason for the heightened interest is undoubtedly the recession in Europe and elsewhere but at the back of the mind of every businessman in those parts is the grand vision of 700 million consumers waiting for the good things of life. Indian diplomats abroad have also apparently been busy spreading the word, and the international trade fairs and similar affairs have also helped. But is it perhaps possible that India is being oversold and that hopes are being aroused that can never be fully realised?

Flexible Policy: "We are not selling India; the country is not for sale," said a determined Finance Ministry official who gave the impression that he was holding the purse-strings tightly in his hands. In an interview with INDIA TODAY, Industry Minister Narayan Datt Tiwari made it clear that the so-called open door policy was only a figure of speech. "We do not have an open door policy which welcomes all or any foreign investment," Tiwari says. "Nevertheless, our policy is flexible and pragmatic. We do not believe in technical insularity. We are and will continue to be selective. In the early years of our development effort, we permitted foreign technology and investments in low technology consumer goods. We now seek collaboration in more and more sophisticated fields."

A Finance Ministry official who had worked in the Industry Ministry for years says that too much should not be made of the recent liberalisation measures following the Rs 5,000-crore loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Government has introduced a series of sweeping changes aimed at liberalising imports, encouraging domestic companies to expand production, and assisting the introduction of foreign technology. The foreign investment part, he says, is only marginal. "The country is certainly short of capital despite the high rate of savings, maybe because it has not been possible for us to mobilise savings and convert them into investment. But that does not mean that our doors are open for foreign investment without strings."

Declining Investment: Other officials point out that the share of foreign capital may be significant but is not all that large. Total new private direct investment approved during the decade 1970-80 amounts to just over Rs 60 crore at current prices, or around Rs 6 crore a year, which is neither here nor there. In fact, there is evidence foreign investment in India has decl real terms during the 70s and since 1974. The figure stood at Rs crore in 1970 and apparently steadily to around Rs 1,950 crore in

There have been no official figur then but a figure of Rs 2,000 mentioned by the finance minister ago as an estimate for 1980. If this correct, it is only one-tenth of the investment in the public sector alone private and public sectors are combi share of the foreign investment may more than between 5 and 7 per cent declining.



THE NEW measures may h decline but the general feeling Finance and Industry Ministries what the country is looking for is much foreign cash as technology. E regard to technology, there is no pros an open door policy, for the same that there are no prospects of an ope investment policy. Although there has visible change in attitude at the top— Kant Jha's Economic Reforms Comm mentioned in this connection—there trust of foreign investors, particularly national companies, at all the three levels—political, business and bureau The Government can possibly get ro latter two, but political opposition to economic presence in India is a for hurdle the Government has not been tackle successfully.

"In most calculations in regard t ign technology or investment, the p dimension seems to be overlooked." Bhai Mahavir, the economic expert Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its economic spokesman in the Rajya Sab fact, if there is any platform that can the BJP and the Communist Party of Marxist (CPI-M) together it is the anti- anti-multinational platform. The success of these two parties in the rece assembly elections is seen as a set-back Government's efforts to induct more capital and technology into the co "Foreign technology is capital-int and, therefore, almost by definition employment," says Bhai Mahavir, " not suitable for India."

Qualitative Change: Foreign co used to dealing with the Governm different levels admit that there is a tive change in the approach but th seen such changes come and go and

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Nobody Can Dictate To Us'

UNION Industry Minister Narayan Tiwari must be the busiest minister in Mrs Gandhi's Cabinet. When Economics JAY DUBASHI *and Correspondent* CHAWLA *called on him in his Bhavan office last week, there was a hundred people waiting for him. Through it all sat Tiwari, as unruffled as Buddha, but certainly not lost in the world of files, red tape, cyclostyled papers and the inevitable brown envelopes marked Top Secret. When the time came for the interview, the crowd vanished as if by magic and Tiwari sat down for an hour-long discussion that covered nearly everything from Coca-Cola and* IBM *to Davy McKee and spark plugs. Some excerpts:*

Q. There is once again considerable interest in India abroad. Are we perhaps raising hopes—about investment and trade—which we may not be able to fulfil?

A. We have not aroused exaggerated expectations. We have not said the whole world is open to us, and we have certainly not gone beyond accepted practices.

Q. But we are certainly importing technology in a big way. We can take a specific example—trucks. So far we have had Tatas, Ashok Leyland and a few others but now suddenly a large number of companies are being licensed to make trucks and they are coming out and getting new technology from new sources. Is this a deliberate policy?

A. If you have just one or two companies (in a particular business) and you have monopolies. So we try and diversify the base. It has a spread-out effect. We also take advantage of the favourable international economic environment.

Q. Is this your approach in respect of all industries? Take spark plugs. There is only one really big manufacturer. If, say, [illegible] ***others come in a big way . . .***

A. There should be hardly any objection if the new technology is appropriate for our country. One or two (collaboration agreements) have already been approved. We cannot backslide on the question of technology and if we have to import it, we have to import it. It would be a retrograde step to isolate ourselves from technical progress.

Q. So, you will go on importing it. After 30 years of steady industrial growth, do you think technology is still a major constraint in our growth?

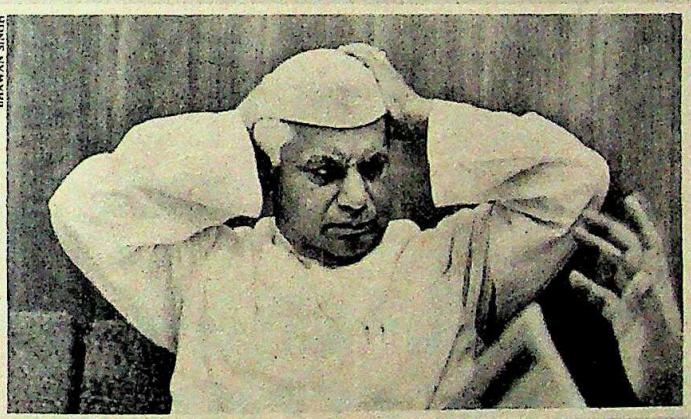
A. In certain sectors, it has been a major constraint. In others, as in computers, it has been deliberate, because we have opted for more employment-intensive industries. But we have to be selective.

Q. What would be the criteria for selection? If, for instance, IBM ***comes in again with a proposal, what would be your reaction?***

A. I do not think that decisions already taken have to be reopened. Neither have they applied nor have we thought of it.

Q. It is often hard to get technology without strings. What do you do then? Do you bend your policies to suit them?

A. The question does not arise. The trouble is that our policies are not known very well outside. So I went to Davos (Switzerland) to tell them in simple terms what the policies were and that they were free to come within the framework of these policies.



BHAWAN SINGH

Tiwari: no scruples about importing technology

Q. Did it help?

A. Although we said nothing new, our going there did make an impact. We were one of the four countries invited but now they have invited us again—only India—and we are considering the matter. This does not mean that our doors are open to anyone. If a company says we are coming, we shall examine its offer, and see whether it fits into our priorities. If not, we say, no; thank you.

For example, take Sulzer (of Switzerland). If they are interested to come here with their advanced technology for textile looms, we shall certainly consider the offer. The same would apply for fuel injection pumps and similar high-technology items. But not cosmetics.

Q. Coming nearer home and talking about liberalisation: people say that you are helping big business and multinationals. Is that true?

A. Every day new inventions are coming up. Technology that is considered most modern today is out of date tomorrow. So, if the skills that the large houses possess can be directed towards more production, more investment, this should not be misconstrued. It should not be used as a political weapon to criticise the Government. In fact, all those who are criticising us now on this score know in their heart of hearts that our policy is a correct one. How can we in a mixed economy shut out some people just because they are supposed to be big? We should not give a political slant to it.

I also feel that the opposition to the IMF loan is irrational and is born out of fear that we are a poor country and IMF is rich and we may not be able to stand up to them. I can tell you that we are strong enough to meet any pressure, big business at home or big business or big money abroad.

I can assure you that nobody can dictate to us. Is there any country in the world which is not importing technology? All countries, of whatever hue and colour, are having technical agreements. Nobody has scruples about getting technology from multinationals.

Q. As you know, all opposition parties from BJP ***to*** CPI-M ***opposed the*** IMF ***loan.***

A. I have talked to many friends (in the Opposition). They privately agree that our policy is a sound one. But they say that we have to criticise you in public. Had they been in power, they would have taken the same decision themselves. I don't see why they make such a fuss about the IMF. Nobody from the IMF has talked to me, let alone dictated anything.

Q. Are you generally happy with what has been achieved during the past year?

A. One can always do better.

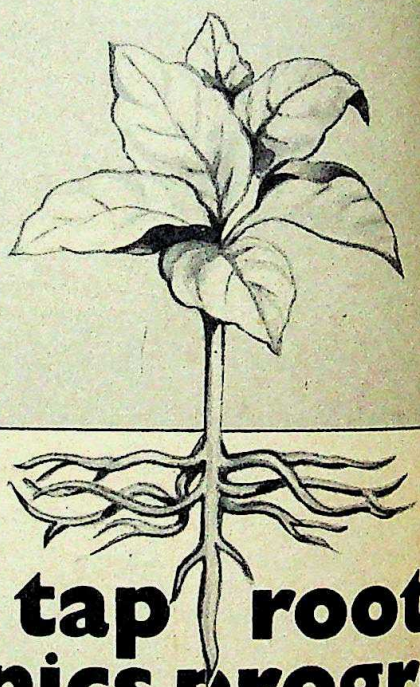
Q. One last question. Why don't you do away with industrial licensing altogether?

A. There are 24 industries for which no licences are required. You will be surprised—people rush in where there is licensing and give a wide berth to industries which are free. It has something to do with human nature, I suppose. What is obtained free, must be worthless!

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INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Winds Of Change

THE FIRST crack in the Government's heavily armoured industrial policy became visible two years ago. Since then, the armour-plating has been gradually beaten into jagged bits of unrecognisable metal. From the outside, industry has knocked insistently at the weaker chinks, doubtless helping the process along with some grease in the sticky areas. From the inside, a progressively cooperative government has diligently pulled out the rivets and screws, until what is left of the entire contraption can no more halt the invading army of industrialists than any Maginot line could the Germans.

COMPANY ☐ PRODUCT	LICENSED CAPACITY *as stated in the company annual report*
Crompton Greaves Ltd ☐ ELECTRIC FANS	*"Registered capacity not specified"*
GEC of India Ltd ☐ FURNACES	*"Unspecified"*
Hindustan Motors ☐ CARS	*"Not specified"*
Larsen & Toubro ☐ SHEEPSFOOT ROLLERS	*"Entire country's demand"*
Madura Coats ☐ COTTON THREAD	*"The licence does not specify any capacity"*
Mohan Meakin Breweries ☐ BEER	*"One of the company's unit is licensed without any limit and therefore no capacity is mentioned"*
Raymond Woollen Mills ☐ HOSIERY-MACHINES	*"Not specified"*

Despite the heady whiff of economic liberalism now blowing through the gaping holes in the once imposing licensing edifice, the Government still likes to make believe that the armour is largely intact. And the industrialists continue to complain about the odd bits of jagged metal which continue to prick them here and there. But the truth is that, by June 1982, the Government of India's industrial policy is scarcely recognisable from the structure built between 1951 and 1973, and preserved in that shape till 1980.

The policy liberalisations have been numerous: special facilities are now on offer for 100 per cent export-oriented units; a large number of industries are allowed automatic growth; production for exports is exempt from licensing and Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) restrictions; easier access to industrial licences is promised provided the new unit is located in any of 83 "zero industry" districts; the list of areas open to the large industrial houses and subsidiaries of transnational corporations has been lengthened, and licence applications are sought to be processed quicker and with greater sympathy. The import and pricing policies have been liberalised; more free trade zones are to be opened; the monopolies law is being amended; tax concessions have been made more attractive for promoting the merger of sick and healthy units; and foreign collaborations are being made easier if not actively encouraged. The major threat of converting loans from financial institutions into equity has now been watered down, encouraging industry to tap these loans for modernization.

Dramatic Results: The results have been dramatic. The number of letters of intent issued by the Government (preparatory to granting an industrial licence) shot up by over 70 per cent in 1980, and foreign collaborations almost doubled in the same year. Clearance of MRTP applications more than trebled last year, and loan sanctions by the financial institutions have increased by over 90 per cent in two years. These are levels of growth unheard of in earlier years, and bear witness to the success of a policy that now

whether the latest shift is for keeps. Government has cash in hand from the ...ld can play about a little bit—liberal ...licensing and so on—but if the econ... ...timate worsens—if there is a bad ... for instance, or a big jump in the ... of oil—there is no guarantee that the ...y will not be reimposed," says the ...ge director of a Bombay-based drug ..., which, like most drug companies, ... having a tough time getting its ... ...ured through the daunting obstacle ... out by the kilometres of red tape ...elhi.

...ce Ministry officials confirm his ... "We are breathing a little more ...w, but things might be different if ...y was empty." The British, for in... ...were shaken by the totally unexpec... ...llation of their Davy-McKee steel ...xtract.

...e had worked on the contract ...ree long years and had roped ...rybody from Prince Charles to ...ret Thatcher to persuade New Delhi ...m the dotted line. We never dreamt ...ment that such a high-powered deal ...e flung out of the window one fine ...g and that too when the Festival of ...as in full swing in London. It only ..." and the sad voice trailed off at the ...d of the telephone.

...le Trimmed: The Davy-McKee deal ...d instance of what happens or might ...when the heat is on. Technology is ...ority, finance second, and almost ... a poor second. The package put ...t by Davy-McKee is still operational, ...e British contractor's key role ...been trimmed down to virtually ...g.

...e shall still get the same steel plant, ...e technology, almost certainly the ...ntractors," says Tiwari, "the only ...ce being the time. Also, Indian engi... ...will now do what the British would ...done."

...dia-watchers tend to ignore the poli... ...nits beyond which no ruling party—...e one led by so forceful a person as ...Gandhi—can go without sacrificing ...nciple of self-reliance. The definition ...t is self-reliance and what is not can ...e from time to time as expediency ...ds.

...e Janata government threw out ...-Cola, a no-technology product, and ...admittedly high-technology product, ...erations asked. Mrs Gandhi's Govern... ...unscrambled a Rs 3,000-crore package ...for a steel plant, again without batting ...eyelid. It might happen again whenever ...Delhi suspects it is being taken for a

—JAY DUBASHI

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Eve-teasing

Adam hiding Limca from Eve



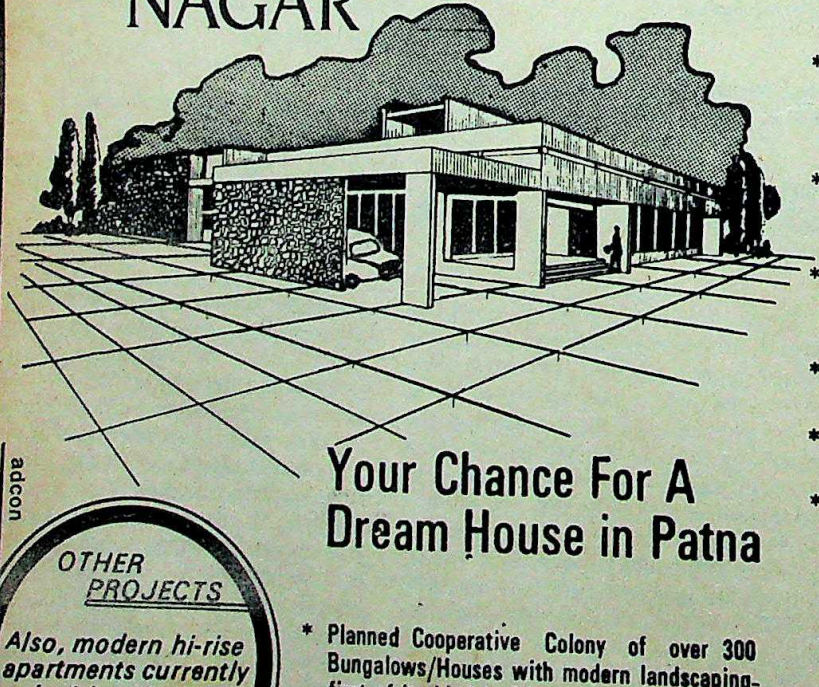
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...upon premium on growth.
...transformation goes beyond the ...specific policy changes. There is, ...ly, a new wind blowing. For years, ...chairmen of the Monopolies ...have railed against the im... Act. But the present Chairman, ...Madhusudhan Rao, says quite ..."Why should the act have more ...don't want to bite anybody." ...would like to see in force a more ...sing policy.

...ther pointer to the new reality, ...e Government's steps towards ...can be traced back to memor... ...submitted, or suggestions made, at ...es by the increasingly influential ...of commerce. And licensing, far ...a bugbear, is now seen by most ...ists as a minor hurdle. Says Ram ...garwal of the Federation of Indian ...of Commerce and Industry ..."By and large, getting licences is not ...e today. The process is very well ...ed, and works quite smoothly." ...ago, that kind of statement from ...spokesman would have been ...ible.

...all that, the basic structure of ...controls remains, if not much of ...ce. The Industries (Development ...ations) Act (IDRA) is still in force, ...MRTP Act. So too is the Foreign ...Regulations Act (FERA). As one ...said, "The system has not been ...d, only liberalised."

...gs Attached: What this means in ...s that most of the liberalisations ...bedged in by many ifs and buts, ...that industry now chafes at. Says ...ise, economic adviser in Tata ...s Ltd: "The liberalisations repre... ...ential measures towards getting rid ...ebwebs which have hampered in... ...production. But the success of even a ...cy is circumscribed by its implem... ...And unless the bureaucrats have ...to implement these policies, the ...ll be poor."

...rtheless, most of the policy cha... ...e met with moderately good results. ...industrial units took advantage of ...enhancement scheme two years ...ther 200 units have already taken ...ge of the policy of automatic growth. ...ense for 100 per cent export-oriented ...e seen 130 applications getting clea... ...year's time. Even if only half these ...me up, exports will increase by Rs ...annually.

...enthusiastic response is also expec... ...new policy of allowing MRTP and ...panies to enter into otherwise ban... ...provided they export 60 to 75 per ...their production; and also to the scheme that encourages companies to enter 83 "zero industry" districts. Perhaps the only major scheme that has met with a poor response is the one which permits exemption of exported production from licensing and MRTP restrictions.

Of all the policy changes, the most sweeping has been the latest. It was announced by Industry Minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari in the Lok Sabha on April 21. In effect, it brushes aside many of the restrictions of the basic industrial law in the country, the IDR Act, under which the Government lays down how much an industrial unit can produce of what item, and also stipulates penalties for contravention of these regulations.

Official Inefficacy: Yet, over the years, the act has often been observed more in the breach. Companies licensed to produce a specified quantity have produced 10 and 20 times that amount, the Government's reaction invariably being a sightless stare. The

"The truth is that, by June 1982, the Government of India's industrial policy is scarcely recognisable from the structure built between 1951 and 1973, and preserved in that shape till 1980."

big industrial houses and multinational subsidiaries have often been the biggest offenders, freely creating unlicensed capacities and producing far in excess of the quantity permitted. Yet, in over 30 years, there has not been a single case of any company being prosecuted for such acts of commission.

H.P. Nanda, chairman of Escorts Ltd, recalls a meeting in the mid-1970s with the then industry minister, T.A. Pai, at which Pai quizzed the industrialists present about excess capacities. Nanda says he retorted: "If there is a market, and if I can produce to feed the market, I will not allow your licensing regulations to come in my way. If you penalise me for this, I will not pay the fine. Please come and arrest me."

This scant respect for the licensing law is shared by most industrialists. According to one count, 46 Birla units have excess capacities installed.

Tiwari's announcement on April 21 finally came to terms with this reality. He announced that the excess capacities already installed would be regularised depending on the maximum level of production in the past five years. Further that the Government would grant a fresh re-endorsed licence for a capacity 33 per cent in excess of the highest production achieved. Coming on top of the existing permission to have 25 per cent excess production, a further 25 per cent automatic growth in a five-year period, and the promise of a fresh endorsement of 33 per cent excess capacity next year, what the new liberalisation means is that a company can install or regularise capacity over 400 per cent higher than the initial licensed capacity.

THIS revolutionary change is justified by official spokesmen in the name of rapid growth in the year of productivity; growth being both quicker and cheaper through expansion than through setting up new units. The Government has also sought to put an end to persistent criticism from industry that this is the only country where higher production is penalised rather than rewarded. And industry now has the elbow room for giving relatively free rein to its normal growth instincts.

But if growth is the objective, the latest measure will, ironically enough, help not so much those units who want to increase capacity in the future (because there are limits on adding fresh machinery) as those who have already violated the IDR Act and installed capacity far in excess of what is licensed.

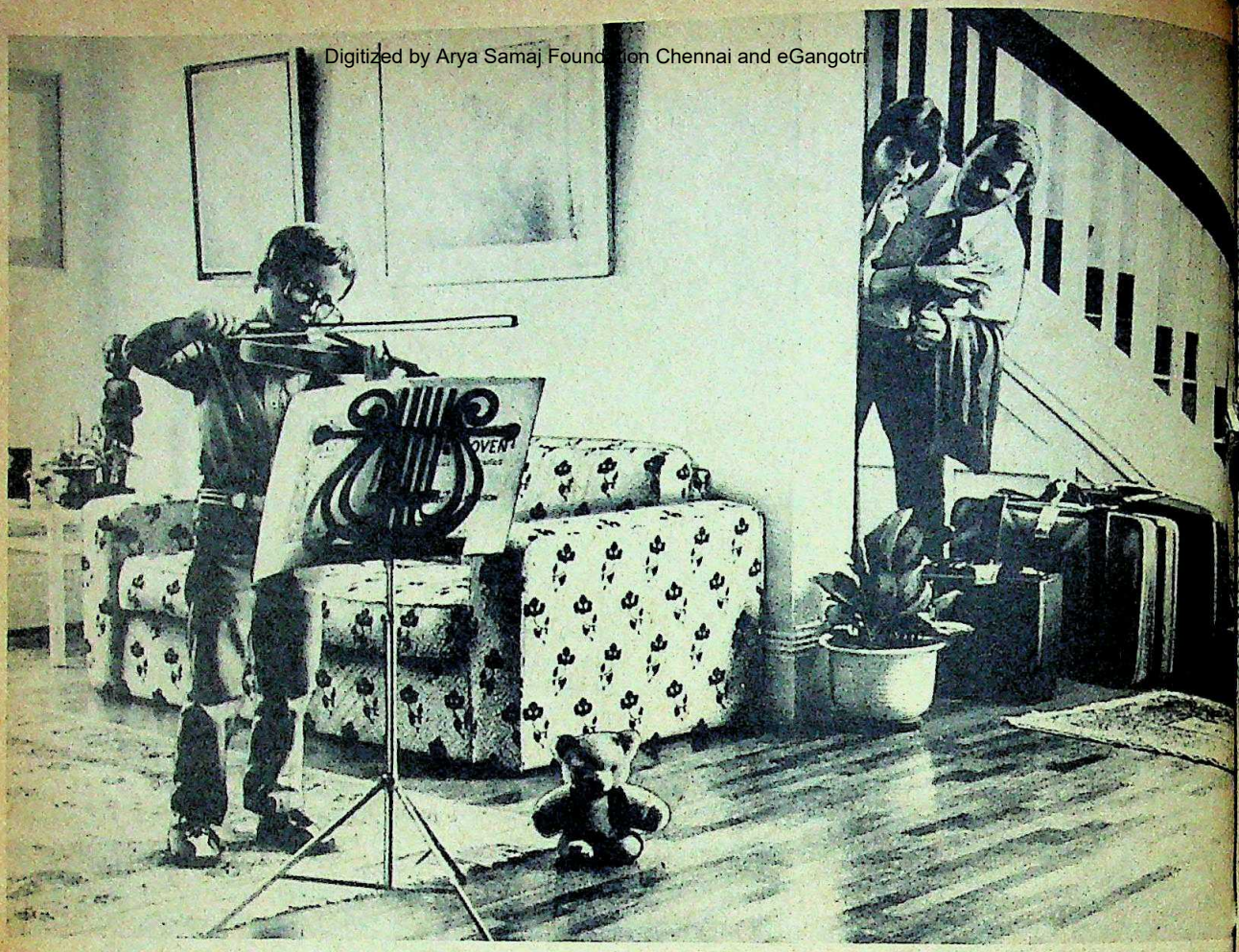
Perhaps the most extreme case of such excess capacity is that of Crompton Greaves, which has a licensed capacity for producing 18,000 sets of metal-cased plugs and sockets. Production in 1979 was—hold your breath—2,24,207 sets. Under the new policy, as S.K. Goyal of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) points out, the company may get its capacity endorsed at 2.99 lakh units, on which base it can legitimately produce 3.73 lakh sets.

Rich Rewards: There are numerous other cases where the rewards for flouting licensing laws could be tremendous. Hindustan Lever has a licensed capacity of 70,018 tonnes of soap, but has recorded a production of 1,62,278 tonnes. Similarly, J.L. Morison's licensed capacity for medicated toothpaste is 31,250 kg, but production has been 67,196 kg. Industry spokesmen themselves now charge that the new policy rewards the guilty, while law-abiding units are at a discount.

Says a spokesman of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASSOCHAM): "The Government has in effect announced a voluntary disclosure scheme for industry." The comparison is apt in more ways than one. As in the case of the voluntary disclosure scheme for black money, the licensing liberalisations too reward most

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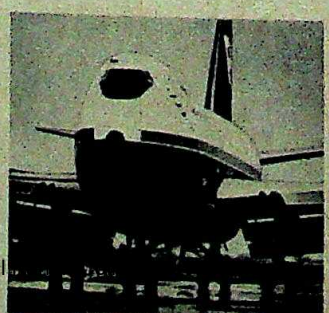
All great airlines are similar in many ways. The need for a high degree of professionalism, advanced technology, efficiency and reliability are common to all. Few airlines achieve the truly highest standards because the one factor, above all others, which makes this possible is intangible. Ambience.

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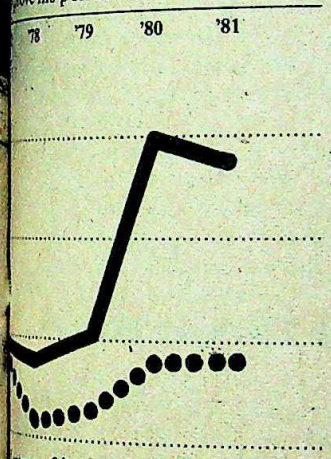
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have been the most guilty. And as ...se of black money, voluntary dis... schemes for industry too seem likely ...me a regular exercise: a capacity ...ation scheme was announced first in ...now a second has followed.

...e lesson to be learnt from this," ...ASSOCHAM spokesman, "is that the ...ent's regulations have lost touch ...strial reality. But instead of scrap... ...egulations, which is what would be ...e basic regulations remain intact. ...s, history can only repeat itself."

...el: Goyal of the IIPA points to ...s of reality that make nonsense of ...ax. "The Government says large ...will not be allowed to expand into ...erved for small-scale industry. But ...y that in many cases large industry ...l industry." He reels off numerous ...prove his point: J.K. Helene Curtis,



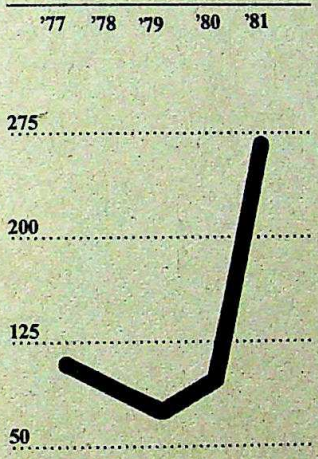
...ters of intent filed and ...ustrial licences granted

...cale unit, is owned by the Singhania ...Dental Products of India Ltd, ano... ...l unit, belongs to Shaw Wallace, as ...ro-Pharma Products Ltd. Indian ...l Diesel Co Ltd is owned by ..., Ewac Alloys by Larsen and ...Garment Enterprises Ltd by Finlay, ...a and on.

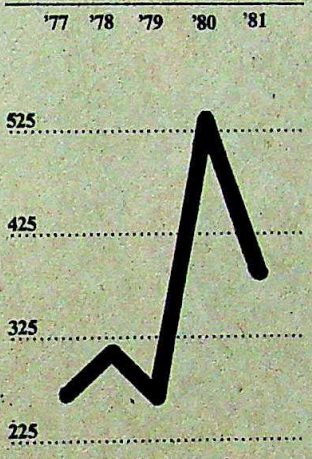
...a further absurdity, many units don't ...y stipulated licensed capacity at all. ...has put together a list of 32 cases ...licensed capacities are either "un... ..." or "not fixed". And in one unique ...aeven and Toubro, the licensed ca... ...r sheepsfoot rollers is claimed to be ...ure country's demand".

...farcical nature of much of in... ...licensing underlines the futility of ...overnment's latest measures. And if ...is the objective, the Government ...be barking up the wrong tree. ...ing to one count, of the 2,948 licences ...the 729 companies quoted on Indian ...changes, only 186 (6.3 per cent) had ...ation level more than 25 per cent in excess of licensed capacity. In contrast, 1,357 licences had a capacity utilisation of less than 25 per cent. The obvious question then is: if the objective is growth, which should be the area of attention—the 186 cases where there is excess production or the 1,357 cases where production is abnormally low?

Stringent Criticism: Some of the other official initiatives too have run into stringent criticism. Companies controlled by the large houses or multinational corporations abroad have now been allowed to enter any field provided they export a specified part of their total production. But what happens if, once the production capacities are established, the companies turn round and plead that they find it difficult to export? Such export obligations have been imposed in numerous cases in the past, but the Government has never penalised anyone for failing to stick to the commitments given. So,



Clearance of applications from MRTP companies



Foreign collaborations approved



Loan sanctions by financial institutions

will MRTP and FERA companies use the export loophole to move into otherwise barred areas? And will they then knock out competing small-scale units?

While the critics characterise the new liberalisations as a sell-out to industry, industry itself remains dissatisfied with the carrots now on offer. Britannia Industries, for instance, has a capacity to produce 40,000 tonnes of bread, but this item is reserved for small industry. Britannia's General Manager A.K. Ganguly complains: "Because of this reservation, we cannot benefit from the new policies, though we have the capacity for increased production."

Numerous other companies with excess capacities may not be able to exploit the policy relaxation, because they come under the category of "dominant" undertakings (those who control more than 33 per cent of the market for a product). This was the chief complaint at a meeting industry representatives had with Industry Minister Tiwari in Bangalore last fortnight. According to one document presented there, the criterion of dominance has "debilitated the fundamental objective of the policy of regularisation of installed productive capacity".

No Comment: With issues such as these yet to be sorted out, company spokesmen were reluctant to venture comment on how much the new announcements would help them. Said V.K. Bali, president of Tata Oil Mills: "We understand that we are going to get at least some benefits under the new proposals. But we are still asking for clarifications because the implications of this policy are not yet clear."

A leading Bombay-based drug company was equally uncertain: "The benefit of the expansion will be available to us, but we'll know about the implementation only after we apply for it and get a reply. Even under the policy of automatic growth, allowed two years ago, we have not got anything in hand though we should get the benefit of this also."

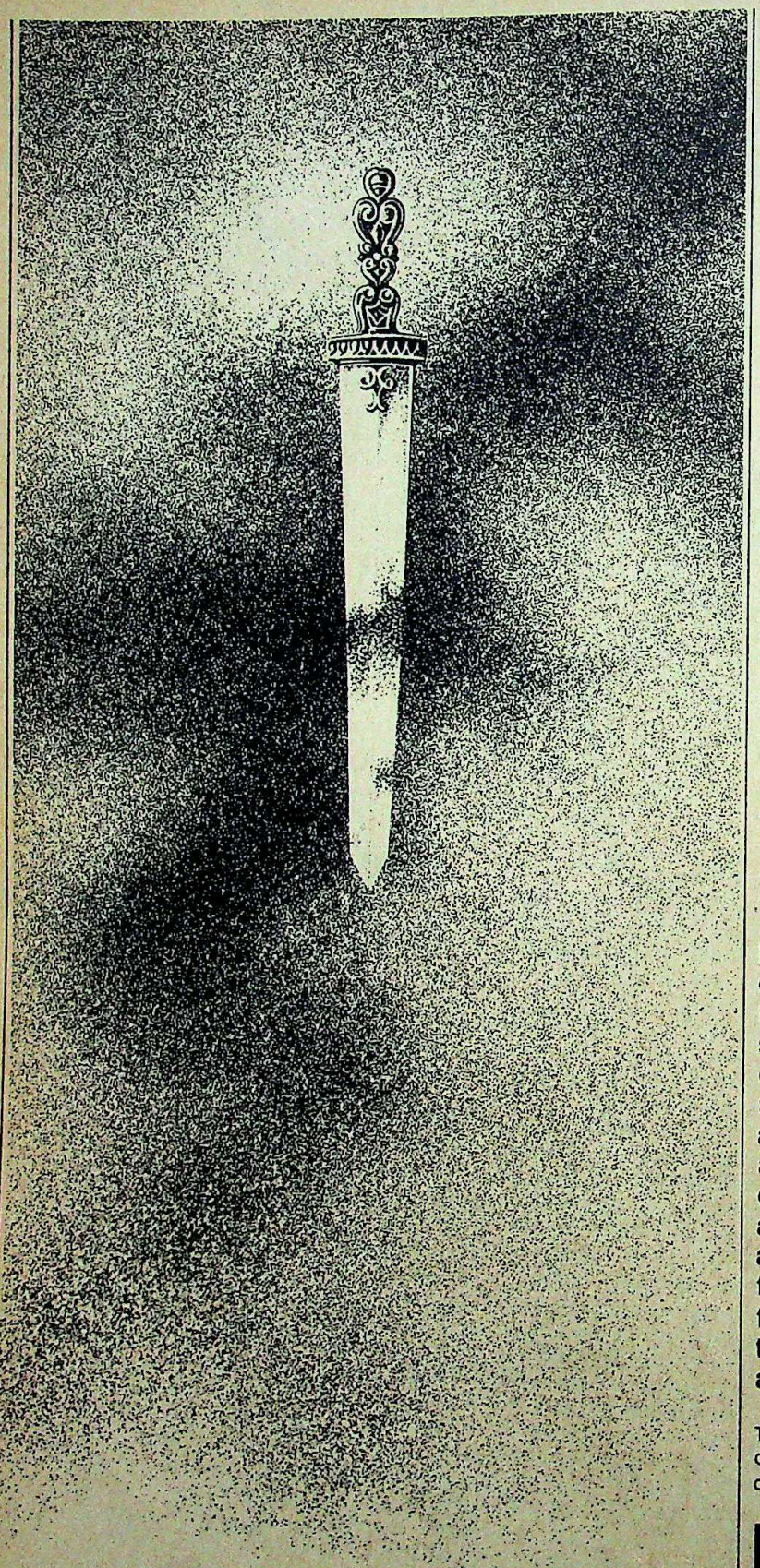
Both multinational subsidiaries and companies belonging to the large houses seemed to feel, as a rule, that the implementation of the liberalisations, past and present, has been hamstrung by qualifying conditions, restrictive clauses and cautious implementation. That, as well as the confusing and contradictory nature of some of the liberalisations, seemed to explain why not a single company had applied by the end of May (the initial cut-off date) for excess capacity regularisation. The last date for applications is now June 30, and the Government expects that about 500 applications should come in by then.

Meanwhile, industry's chafing at the restrictions that remain reflects, in essence, a dissatisfaction with the Government's reluctance to do away with the entire body of industrial regulations. But, for the moment at least, the Government is not willing to go the whole hog. Liberalisation remains the watchword, not laissez-faire.

—T.N. NINAN with bureau reports

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The Threat Within

He threw light on the evolution of man. In the process, he carried out a monumental survey of nature and environment and observed the struggle for survival among all that live. A hundred years after his death, that environment of Charles Darwin (1809—1882) and, within it man himself, are threatened by pollution of frightening proportions. Even the fittest can hope to survive only through global efforts in science and technology.

This is the stark simplicity of the message of June 5, 1982, The World Environment Day declared by the United Nations.

Crompton Greaves

ULKA-CG-4-82

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...viet Shopping Spree

...HE USSR is fast emerging as the ...largest growth area in India's de...sperate export drive. By January ...1981, it had overtaken both the ...States and the European Economic ...nity (EEC) to become the single ...yer of Indian goods.

...'s export growth last year was in ...ected almost solely to Soviet Russia. ...to the US were stagnant, and those ...EEC declined for the second year ...While trade deficits with the EEC ...US trebled in a year, the deficit of Rs ...with East Europe turned into a ... of Rs 156 crore. Exports to East ...moved up from 13 per cent of the ...1979–80 to over 24 per cent last year, ...ehind West Europe (down from 31 ...er cent) and the American continent ...at 14 per cent).

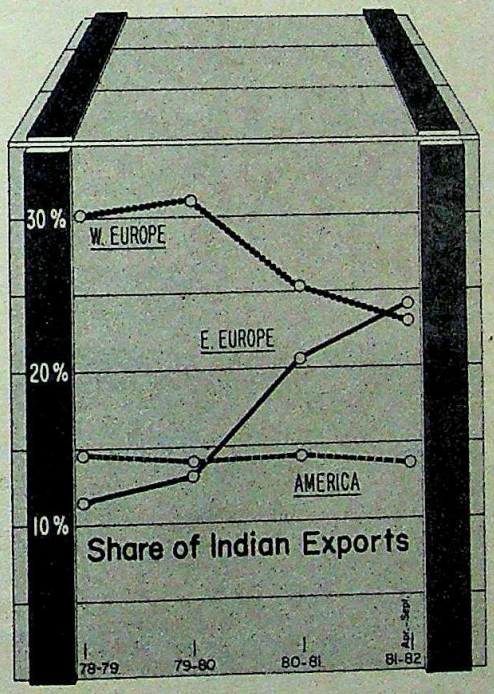
...ian buyers have cleaned out the ...marketplace of items as diverse as ...ite, soaps, cosmetics, Virginia tob...cotton textiles, carpets, and oilseed ...dairy cattle. The shopping has been ...ated largely on consumer goods, ...e in acute short supply in Moscow

...ressive Growth: Two years ago, ...xports to the Soviet Union increased ...ggering 81 per cent, from Rs 638 ...Rs 1,157 crore, and the provisional ...for last year's growth place it at over ...ent. Exports of cosmetics, drugs and ...als shot up by 140 per cent, coffee by ...ent, raw cotton by 73 per cent, cotton ...s by 24 per cent, and rice and ...by over 20 per cent, while a huge ...port order for cotton textiles will ...than double textile exports.

"This is the biggest export boom ever in ...consumer goods industry," says the head ...large soap-manufacturing company. ...panies which earlier exported only ...l amounts have now entered the field ...sive way."

...vitably, the Soviet buying spree has ...ted a boom in export-based industries. ...y caught unprepared, Indian entrep...s and industrialists have gone in for ...scale expansions and diversifications. ...duty-free export promotion areas of the ...a Free Trade Zone (KFTZ) and the ...a Cruz Electronics Export Processing ...(SEEPZ) have, in the past three years, ...galvanised into a spurt of growth ...ity. The once defunct KFTZ exported Rs ...crore worth of goods last year, a 1,000 per ...increase from Rs 5.5 crore three years .... The current year's target is Rs 100 crore. But orders placed by the Soviet Union are already far in excess of this figure. SEEPZ too has grown dramatically, and is expected to increase exports by 40 per cent each year.

New Units: Virtually every large industrial group in the country has set up export-oriented units, both in the duty-free zones and outside. Hindustan Lever has installed a detergent factory to fulfil a Rs 15 crore annual order from Russia, and the Tata Oil Mills Company (TOMCO) a 20,000-tonne toilet soap plant which will export goods worth Rs 16 crore this year. Plants have recently been commissioned by the Birlas' Tungabhadra Industries, the Singhania group's J.K. Helene Curtis, Mafatlal Apparels, Ambalal Sarabhai Enterprises, cosmetics makers Lakmé and Cheeseborough Ponds, engineering giant Larsen and Toubro, and drug multinational Hoechst. In SEEPZ too, computer manufacturers Tata Burroughs and a string of other electronic companies have sprung up since the boom began three years ago.



The Birlas' Transasia Carpets and Modinagar-based Modi Carpets, both set up to mass-produce machine-made carpets on the eve of the last Indo-Soviet trade agreement over two years ago, have thrown themselves into production and exports with a will. Said a senior corporate executive in Modi Enterprises: "This was a heaven-sent chance for us. Normally it would take an export-based unit at least three years to explore and develop markets, but in this case we are getting huge orders which we can barely fulfil." Over 60 per cent of Modi carpets are now exported to Russia, fetching Rs 12 crore, and export growth is projected at a minimum annual rate of 20 per cent.

Last fortnight, the Modis were getting ready to set up another unit to cater to the Soviet market. A 100 per cent export-based unit in the Thane industrial belt will turn out its first Xerox plain-paper copiers next September. The plant, a joint venture with Rank Xerox of UK, a subsidiary of Xerox Worldwide Inc, already has a firm five-year order for up to 35,000 copiers valued at between Rs 75 and 100 crore. The company will import every component from Rank Xerox, which holds 40 per cent of its equity, assemble the machines in Thane, and export to the USSR at a minimum mark-up of 30 per cent on the imported price.

THE SOVIET lunge into the Indian market has been caused by acute foreign exchange shortage to pay for imports from the West. Trade with India, however, is settled in rupees through a semi-barter arrangement. In addition, the United States has intermittently placed partial embargoes on exports to the USSR. On the other hand Indian exporters have turned to the Soviet market because of recession in the West and the rising trade barriers. Explains Commerce Secretary Abid Hussain: "We told Europe and the US that if they create trade problems for us, we will naturally turn to the Soviet Union. And the Soviets in turn will buy from us instead of from them."

For multinationals like Xerox, this rupee trade agreement has offered a convenient route into Russia, which has traditionally fought shy of allowing giant western corporations in. Having waited long for an opportunity to get around this, multinational subsidiaries in India have been at the forefront of the rupee trade exports. West European pharmaceutical giants' subsidiaries in India, Hoechst, Ciba-Geigy, Glaxo and Sandoz exported almost Rs 25 crore worth of drugs to the Soviet Union last year. And Cheeseborough Ponds alone earned Rs 20 crore in cosmetics and shampoos.

This is an arrangement which suits everybody: the parent companies abroad find a way into the Soviet market and boost sales of raw materials; the Indian subsidiaries gain the value added by production/assembly, and rack up export figures that justify their presence in India; and the Soviets find they can get goods they need without spending scarce foreign exchange. In fact, the USSR specifically asked Rank Xerox to set up a unit in India so that they could make huge imports while preserving foreign exchange.

Strong Criticism: For all that, the sys-

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Administrative Office: Mang

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had its share of critics. "This is a fraud on the country," says a economist. "We buy raw material for hard currency and export the goods for a soft currency. These are based on political, not economic, and are at the expense of our own exchange reserves."

Commerce Secretary Hussain dismmently: "A currency is only as what you can buy with it. And in your exports, we are getting from troleum, fertiliser, and strategic quipment. If we did not have rupee e would have to pay for these in dollars."

er objections to Indo-Soviet trade ecent pattern include charges that buy goods cheap from India and them to the West for the hard they need. Although there is evidthis kind of "switch" trading in ities like oilseed cakes and castor oil, it is difficult to quantify its size. While the loss to India is therefore anybody's guess, most experts feel that the Russian need for consumer goods is so great that they will be unlikely to transfer large quantities to West Europe.

Rising Numbers: The criticism notwithstanding, rupee exports continue to boom with increasing numbers of manufacturers ready to join the bandwagon. In 1981, licences were given by the Government to 103 units which were 100 per cent export-oriented. Virtually every one of them will sell mainly to the Russians. Exports from these units will reach Rs 1,936 crore in the next five years, according to the official calculations. And with the recession in the West continuing, Indian exporters are growing steadily more dependent on the Soviet Union for a market.

But how long will the Soviet shopping spree continue? Manufacturers and exporters are both wary of any long-term dependence on a single market, and see the present Soviet purchases as providing a springboard to enter western markets later. Says TOMCO President V.K. Bali: "The Soviet buying boom has given Indian exporters a base from which they can have a look at the world. It's been very good business so far, and we hope it'll always remain so. But meanwhile we are trying to develop other markets and reduce our dependence on a single buyer."

Adds a Modi spokesman: "The Russian purchases have been a shot in the arm for Indian industry. It has created an avenue for a large-scale entry into high-technology exports of items like computers, word processors and copiers." The way most exporters see the future, the Soviet market could turn out to be just the kind of catalyst needed to spur Indian exporters to take a closer look at the hard currency markets.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

GY

eaner Cooking

OAL is one of the messier fuels coming as it does in unwieldy lumps which stain everything they However, a new project soon to be ched by Coal India Limited (CIL) will empt to bring this most fundamental gels to the user, especially the hou-e, in easily storable and clean pre-ssed blocks called 'cocakes'. These be burnt in specially designed stoves ging in quality from the humble clay to the 'super deluxe' with a sophis-ted draft control and a sinuous mney.

The cocakes are the idea of Jaiesh K. , project officer at the Central Mine ning and Design Institute Ltd, nchi. Sinha says he was vastly en-raged by senior executives of CIL in his empt to design standard and con-ient coal blocks out of the inferior le coal fines—dust and rubble left as ste from the mines. The process he ceived and put down on paper is entially quite simple: the fines are ced to even dust and then bound into compact cylindrical block with a chemi-l binder. A series of symmetrically anged air passages in the blocks ensur-complete combustion of the block.

Variety: CIL thinks so much of the ncept that it has decided to put a little over Rs 20 lakh into a pilot plant which is pected to produce 4,000 tonnes of the blocks at the end of the first year. These will come in all sizes, ranging from the 15-minute quickie to the four-hour heavyweight. The cost of the cakes will vary from 25 paise for the smallest to Rs 2.50 for the largest.

The *chulhas* also range in price from the 100-rupee Janata burner to the Rs 300



Sinha demonstrates his *chulha*

'deluxe' and 'super deluxe'. Their basic feature is draft control, feeding air to the block until, at the peak of its heat, it glows a warm red. Says Sinha: "The cocake is totally consumed—even while it is approaching full combustion, you can warm water for your bath. Thus nothing is wasted." He has also designed a samovar-like structure, a water funnel embracing the chimney.

Unfortunately, there is no way of switching off the block once it is set alight, and dousing it with water only diminishes its heat-giving qualities. The designer gets around this major stumbling block by saying that the fuel comes in all shapes and sizes and it should not be too difficult to adjust the size to the need. Another difficulty is that the block takes some time to attain a high temperature, so it cannot quite be the solution when a quick cup of coffee or tea is required.

Portable Stoves: What can be the solution to this particular need is another range of cakes, made out of rice husk, that Sinha has made. These are small and burn in small stoves that are simplicity itself: an open box of tin with a central pillar for air. These can be carried about in the pocket and should be useful for outdoor work. Sinha, who has obviously got a little carried away by the spirit of invention, has even designed a small portable pressure cooker whose handles convert to a spoon and a fork, meant for use with the portable stove.

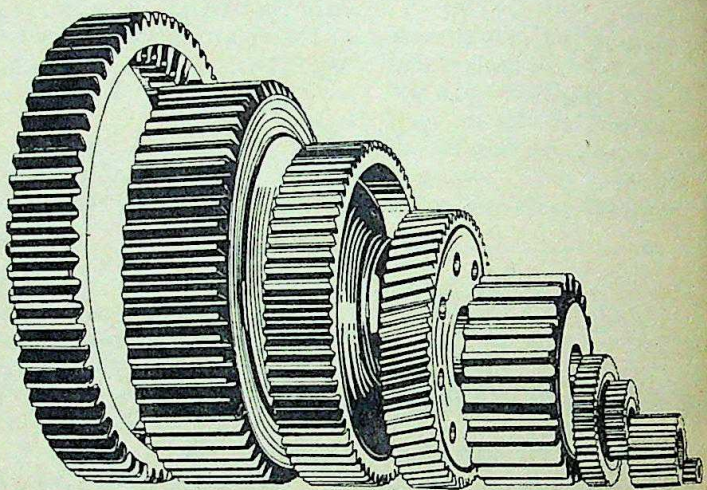
• The Defence Ministry is reportedly satisfied with the trials carried out last month. Sinha says that the preliminary market surveys CIL carried out to determine whether it was worth sinking money into the venture have been encouraging. By September, the first of the cocakes and stoves will be displayed in stores, the acid commercial test for CIL's brand of appropriate energy technology.

—JAGANNATH DUBASHI

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The final quality checks

It doesn't stop there. Both during manufacturing and after, the gear goes through many more tests. Tests for crackfreeness and tooth accuracy. For correctness of manufacture and profile accuracy, on a Maag profile testing machine — both before final machining and after. And, the gear face is inspected again and again to make sure that it's free of flaws. A long process certainly, but second nature to us. Because every one of our gears must be good in every way. We won't settle for anything less than the best. Should you?

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e Race egins

ASTIC manufacturer in Bangalore ...ll steal a march over the Indian ...r industry next month when a cute ...r car, the Dolphin, will be on sale ... Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore. ...ured by the Sunrise Auto Indus... (SAIL), in technical collaboration ... Reliant Motor Company, UK, ... small car manufacturer, the Dol... cost over Rs 80,000. This will make ... the most expensive cars on the ... but also the most modern.

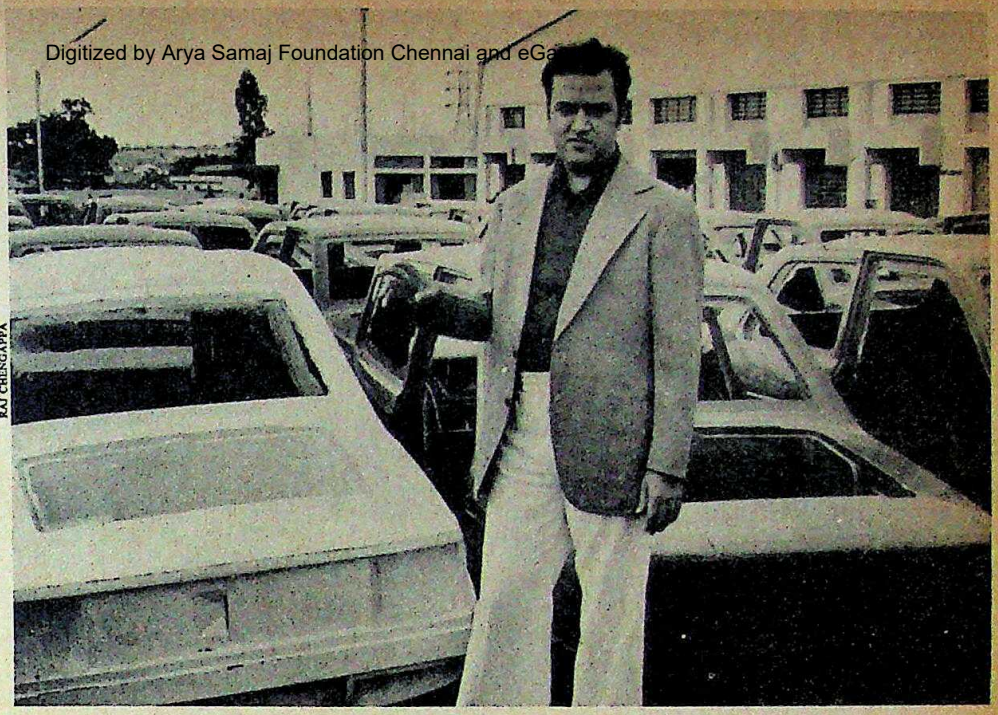
... Karan Sipani, 30, SAIL's youthful ...g director, is confident of selling the ...rs he expects to turn out annually. ...s that bookings have already been ... the first two years' production. ...confidence stems from several un... ...tures that could help the Dolphin ... splash. With an economical fuel ...ption of 20.3 km to the litre, the ...'s water-cooled 38 BHP (brake horse... engine can take the car to a peak ... 130 km per hour with an accele... ...d to 80 km per hour in 11.8 seconds. ...-door model, slightly smaller than ...ier Padmini, has a fibreglass body ...kes it lighter than the latter, and is ...th floor gears.

...rt from its sleekness and claimed ..., the Dolphin will be fitted with ...gue items as a crash pad steering, ...ft switch-cum-steering lock, electri... ...dscreen wiper, dual brake system, ... window glasses, hazard warning ...d anti-burst door locks.

...rrent Scepticism: For the first three ...ars, will be importing the English car ...pletely knocked down condition and ...y assembling the product. Indigenous ...ction will then follow. But rival car ...facturers were scoffing at the project, ...ing out that Sipani could hardly hope ...facture a car on his investment of Rs ... Sipani however claims his final ...t cost will be Rs 6 crore, but even this is ...re near the figure needed for any full... ...r manufacturing operation.

...dustry insiders also point out that ... has a poor track record with its ... three-wheeler vehicle, the Badal. ...ction of this has ground to a halt ..., as Sipani claims, engines are not ...ge.

...officials of the new public sector outfit, ...ki Udyog Ltd, refused to consider the ...e as any threat to their own Suzuki



RAJ CHENGAPPA

Sipani with his cars: stealing a march on the competition

project. They wondered how Sunrise could afford to market the Dolphin for Rs 80,000 when import duties are around 135 per cent. According to Sipani, he pays import duty of only Rs 18,000 per vehicle—which implies that he has managed to get some kind of import duty concession from the Government. "If he were paying the full duty leviable," a Maruti official pointed out, "this kind of import-based operation would not be possible."

Meanwhile, more serious competition seemed to be shaping up for Maruti from other quarters. An official announcement in late April threw open the manufacture of passenger cars to the large industrial houses and foreign-controlled companies. By last fortnight, the market was rife with rumours that at least two private companies were thinking of jumping into the fray. The names mentioned were Escorts and DCM.

Likely Competitors: DCM spokesmen specifically denied that they would produce any product that would compete with Maruti. Nevertheless industry circles continued to speculate on the possibility of the company turning out an estate car (which could qualify as a light commercial vehicle, for which DCM has a licence).

Escorts, similarly, was getting ready to enter the light commercial vehicle market. Added the company's Chairman, H.P. Nanda, that he would certainly apply for a licence to manufacture cars as well. Nanda's executives are known to be talking to possible collaborators in Japan, including Daihatsu. But it seems likely that the car project will come a little later.

Maruti officials, however, remained confident that they had a winner. A test drive of the Suzuki saw the car doing the Delhi-Kalka distance of 254 km in three hours and five minutes (average speed: 82 kmph, maximum speed: 130 kmph), and the 1,020 km round trip from Delhi to Jalori Pass (height: 10,280 ft) and back in a driving time of 16 hours 25 minutes.

However promising that performance, the moves in other quarters showed that the race for the Indian car market has not ended with the Maruti-Suzuki deal; it has just only begun.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA and T.N. NINAN

THE MARKETS

Turbulence

THE MARKETMEN are nothing if not optimists. They hope against hope that most of the rumours to which the market is prey will not come true: coal prices will not be raised, the credit squeeze will be lifted and price controls will be relaxed. Nothing of the sort has happened, or is likely to happen. Coal prices have gone up and are likely to push up power tariffs. The credit squeeze, a Reserve Bank official has reminded, will continue for another three months, and most price controls will remain. The net result is that the marketmen do not know whether they are coming or going and prices are depressed further. The market has lost heavily during the last few weeks and it is unlikely that the downward slide will be arrested in the near future.

The only scrips which are holding well against the swelling tide are synthetics—Baroda Rayon, Century Spinning, Reliance and a few nylon companies. Drug companies are not doing too badly either: Ranbaxy has taken in hand an expansion-

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ACTIVE STOCKS

High	Low		Close 4.6.82	Change on Fort-night
1982				
19.25	11.25	Ambalal Sarabhai	12.00	– 1.25
59.00	36.10	Ashok Leyland	36.10	– 8.65
377.00	212.50	Associated Cement	312.50	– 1.00
64.00	46.00	Atlas Copco	59.50	– 1.50
1,650.00	1,325.00	Bajaj Auto	1,490.00	– 85.00
49.60	36.10	Ballarpur	36.40	– 2.85
467.00	352.00	Baroda Rayon	382.00	nil
42.00	31.50	Bharat Gears	31.50	– 2.00
33.70	26.80	Birla Jute	30.00	– 0.30
65.00	53.00	Blow Plast	59.50	0.50
80.00	66.50	Bombay Dyeing	68.50	– 1.00
18.69	16.44	British Paints	18.19	nil
24.70	20.20	Brooke Bond	21.25	– 0.35
18.60	15.40	Calcutta Electric	15.75	0.35
346.00	257.50	Calico Mills	257.50	– 12.50
220.00	177.50	Ceat Tyres	190.00	– 5.00
1,011.00	865.00	Century Spinning	1,000.50	14.50
25.00	19.50	Chemicals & Fibres	19.50	0.30
168.00	80.00	Colgate	89.00	– 12.00
44.25	41.50	Chloride India	42.00	nil
16.20	12.05	Crescent Dyes	12.10	– 0.60
44.50	33.00	Delhi Cloth Mills	33.50	– 0.50
21.70	18.30	Dunlop India	18.30	nil
20.00	16.50	East India Hotels	17.25	– 0.75
41.00	28.00	Elecon	28.00	– 3.50
49.87	35.44	Escorts	35.62	– 1.25
46.50	35.75	Food Specialities	46.25	4.75
48.75	38.00	Garware Nylon	43.50	– 2.00
30.00	25.40	General Electric	26.35	0.95
37.20	31.30	Guest Keen Williams	31.40	– 0.20
506.00	368.00	Gujarat Fertilisers	384.00	– 26.00
49.20	30.60	Hindustan Aluminium	31.25	– 10.95
56.00	49.50	Hindustan Lever	49.50	– 1.75
28.00	23.50	Hoechst Dyes	24.00	nil
23.60	18.00	Indian Aluminium	18.00	– 0.70
25.20	19.25	Indian Cable	19.25	– 0.10
247.50	185.00	Indian Dyestuff	185.00	– 12.50
26.00	21.60	Indian Explosives	21.60	– 0.70
107.00	55.50	Indian Hotels	56.00	– 7.00
35.00	26.00	Indian Organic	28.00	– 3.00
35.90	26.20	Indian Oxygen	26.20	nil
150.00	125.00	Ingersoll-Rand	134.00	– 4.00
45.00	31.50	Ion Exchange	31.50	– 1.00
27.25	21.00	ITC	27.20	0.10
36.00	28.75	Jayshree Tea	29.25	– 3.00
73.20	58.60	J.K. Synthetics	59.70	– 2.20
54.00	46.00	Kesoram	47.10	– 1.70
150.00	115.00	Kinetic Engineering	123.00	– 8.00
35.75	21.00	Kothari (Madras)	21.00	– 1.00
86.00	49.00	Larsen & Toubro	51.25	– 0.25
16.50	15.10	Madura Coats	15.10	– 0.40
61.00	42.50	Mahindra & Mahindra	43.00	– 1.50
17.50	11.75	Metal Box	11.75	– 0.50
36.50	23.75	Mukand Iron	23.75	– 3.50
210.00	178.00	National Organic	180.00	2.00
63.00	35.50	Nirlon	36.00	– 1.50
48.50	34.30	Orient Paper	35.30	– 2.40
30.30	27.00	Pieco Electronics	27.75	0.15
97.00	63.00	Ponds India	63.00	– 5.50
407.00	303.00	Premier Auto	334.00	7.00
29.75	21.00	Ranbaxy	25.25	– 1.37
58.25	35.00	Raymond	35.00	1.00
168.00	118.00	Reliance Textiles	152.00	2.00
29.00	27.30	Shaw Wallace	27.40	– 0.90
66.00	37.00	Siemens India	37.25	– 0.25
47.62	43.12	Shriram Fibres	45.56	– 2.06
16.60	12.75	SPIC	12.75	– 1.55
31.50	19.00	Sylvania & Laxman	19.25	– 3.25
59.00	45.50	Tata Chemicals	51.50	2.00
429.00	310.00	Tata Steel	429.00	4.00
737.00	414.00	Telco	479.00	– 18.00
70.75	39.70	Texmaco	39.70	– 8.70
28.10	24.20	Union Carbide	24.25	– 0.15
33.50	25.25	Usha Martin Black	25.60	– 2.00
291.00	228.00	Voltas	236.00	4.00
26.50	19.10	Zuari Agro	19.25	– 0.50

cum-diversification programme, costing around Rs 6.5 crore, of which about 30 per cent will be financed through its own resources and the balance through a convertible debenture issue. Other companies are also going in for debentures—Larsen & Toubro and Guest Keen Williams for instance—but they are much smaller in relation to their net worth.

Temporary Difficulties: The convertible debenture issues have added a totally new dimension to the equity market, and since the conversion ratios as well as the conversion periods vary from company to company, they affect equity prices also. How much of the current turmoil in the market is due to the debenture issues and how much to other factors is not quite clear; but it is surprising that so many companies should come forth with sizeable debenture offers at a time of incipient recession brought on by the squeeze.

The talk of recession on a wide front is almost certainly far-fetched with the exception, perhaps, of a few industries like engineering which are always the first to be affected in such cases. Drugs and pharmaceuticals may be the last to be so affected—if at all—since people will fall ill, recession or no recession. It is, however, unlikely that the Government will allow things to deteriorate so far as to plunge the entire industrial sector into darkness. The stock market is evidently passing through temporary difficulties, which might continue until August or so, by which time the prospects for the next harvest would be clear.

Unsettling Factors: What does one do in the meantime? It is on the cards that quite a few scrips which now look—and have done so for years—rather overpriced will turn out to be quite attractive. Scrips like Escorts, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ashok Leyland and Larsen & Toubro are likely to lose heavily in the course of the next few weeks, maybe by as much as 25 to 30 per cent. That will be the time to pick them up, for the companies are intrinsically strong, and once out of the woods should spurt ahead with vigour. The next in line would be chemical companies—Union Carbide, Hindustan Lever and others—who are also likely to be affected by the squeeze, but only at second remove.

There is also something of a mini-crash in the bullion market, prices of silver having slipped by more than 10 per cent in less than a month. Whether this will have any effect on the stock market remains to be seen. Apart from the credit squeeze, there are also such unsettling factors as the recent state assembly elections which have not gone too well for the ruling party. The markets can stand anything but uncertainty, and there is too much turbulence in the air.

WORLD VALUE OF RU

Country	Currency and Unit		TT Selling Rates (Rs)
Australia	As $	1	
Austria	As Sch	100	9.826
Bahrain	Dinar	1	56.6082
Bangladesh	Taka	1	24.9155
Canada	Can $	100	43.7960
Egypt	Egp £	1	7.5180
France	Fr Frc	1	11.2872
Hong Kong	HK $	1	1.5259
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	1.6234
Iran	Rial	100	1.4394
Italy	It Lira	100	11.4877
Japan	Jap Yen	100	0.7164
Kenya	K Shilling	1	3.8225
Kuwait	Dinar	1	0.8878
Malaysia	Ml $	1	32.6785
Mauritius	Rupee	1	4.0727
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.8805
Netherlands	D Glds	1	0.7111
Pakistan	Rupee	1	3.9939
Singapore	Sing $	1	0.8203
Spain	Sp Pt	100	4.4583
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	8.8961
Sweden	Sw Kr	1	0.4551
Switzerland	Sw Frc	1	1.5992
Tanzania	T Sch	1	4.6385
Thailand	Baht	100	1.0143
UK	Pound	1	41.09
USA	US $	1	16.8404
UAE	Dihram	1	9.4375
USSR	Rouble	1	2.5655
W. Germany	DM	1	13.1339

These rates were supplied by The Bank of T... New Delhi and quoted between the Banks o... 1982.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

	Latest	Ch...
PRICES		
ET Commodity Price Index, June 2 (1969–70 = 100)	241.2	
Cereals	231.2	
Chemicals	271.2	
Cotton	212.0	
Industrial Fibres	174.8	
Sugar	232.1	
Textile Yarns	222.5	
Vegetable Oils	269.9	
Gold, standard, June 4 (Rs per 10 gm)	1,640.00	
Silver, .999, June 4 (Rs per kg)	2,585.00	
SHARES		
ET Share Price Index, June 2 (1969–70 = 100)	226.0	
Cement	142.0	
Chemicals	182.2	
Engineering	369.4	
Fertilisers	178.9	
Man-made Fibres	456.7	
Paper	410.4	
Rubber Goods	132.0	
MONEY		
Money Supply, April 23		
Bank Deposits		
Foreign Exchange Assets		

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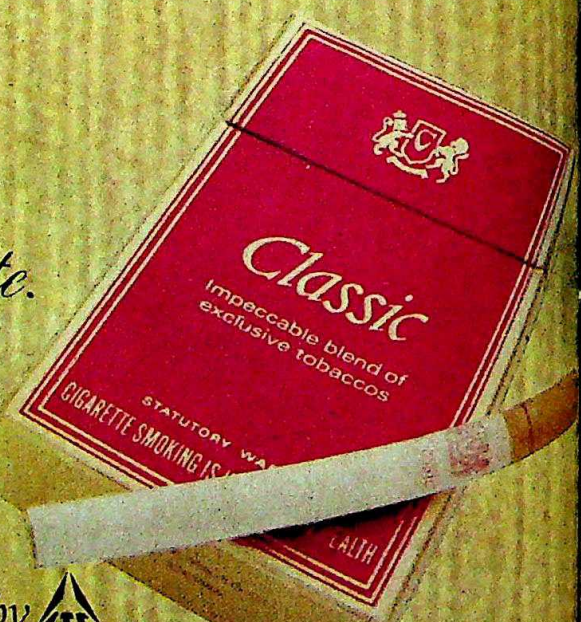
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Disfigured statues of Queen Victoria, King George V and MacDonnel: lonely watch

EIR sunken marbled eyes have seen many seasons pass of pomp and glory, seasons of dust and despair. But in all their imperial majesty they are stiff upper-lipped as ever—with the trembling lower one. Worth well over a crore, 14 of these monumental royal artifacts, including a set of three busts, two huge bronze cast statues and a solitary marble crown, the chipped relics of the forgotten 'Raj days', lie in the scorching sun in a small quadrangle in front of the state museum in Lucknow. Director Ramesh Chandra Sharma, 45, the museum director who is a man with some vision and funds told INDIA TODAY that if the government sanctions a special grant these lifeless statues can be put on a proper gallery display where they would be viewed. But so far there has been no positive response from the not-so-very-helpful authorities and the *firangis* have been left in the open to weather the best and the cold, the damp and the heat.

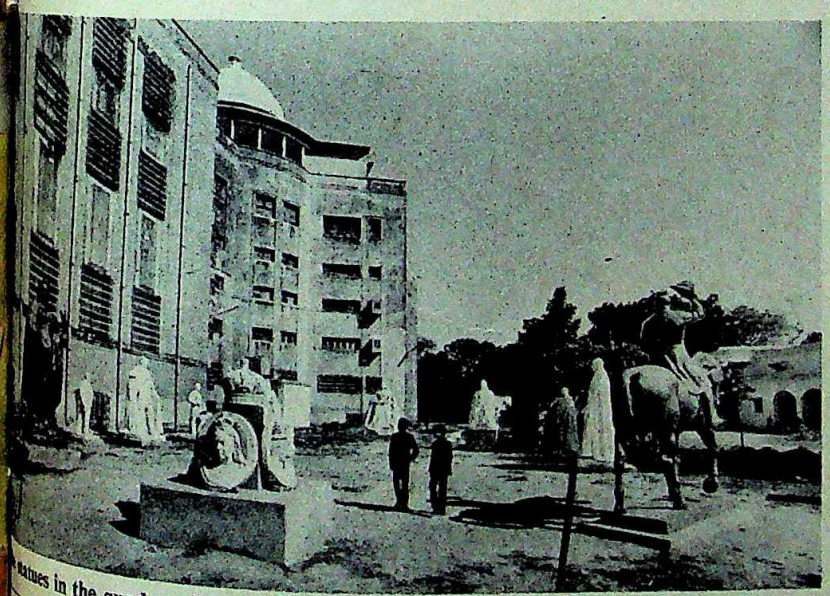
acquired by the museum from various towns in Uttar Pradesh, including Etah, Deoria, Fatehgarh, Bulandshahr, Gorakhpur, Badayun and Bijnor, where most of them are kept in the police reserve lines.

Much as he would like all of them to be sent here to Lucknow, Sharma says paucity of funds might prevent that and they may acquire only the 7 foot high copper statue of Queen Victoria from Gorakhpur and a small bronze bust of George V from Deoria. The rest would be despatched to the other state museum in Mathura. The Lucknow collection would still perhaps be by far the best. The three marble busts (two of George V and one of Queen Victoria) are made of the finest Italian hard limestone and were transported there from Allahabad last year.

The finest tracery work in stone can be seen in a set of identical seated statues of Queen Victoria and in another 12 foot bronze statue of hers as well as in a life-size marble replica of Anthony Patrick MacDonnel chief commissioner of Oudh, crafted by Geo Frampton in 1905. Wearing brocaded high-collars, braided coat cuffs and breasted by a set of tassels, Patrick MacDonnel stands in his breeches, dashing and impressive, with a scroll in his hand and a ceremonial sword at his side. The Victoria statues of course gaze down in all their regal splendour. The inspiring look of royalty is accentuated by the sight of her sceptre and orb as well as her bemedalled robes and the ribbon of honour.

Dusty Splendour: A moss green bronze plaque which lies in a dusty corner of the basement says about Queen Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India: "This statue was erected by her grateful subjects of Cawnpore city and district to commemorate a glorious reign and spotless life devoted to the welfare of her people." Next to it lie two broken halves of metallic laurel leaves, emblems of victory over an empire lost. Outside in the quadrangle is also an equestrian bronze statue of Sir Harcourt Butler, governor of the United Provinces formerly including the state of Oudh.

Surprisingly, two tall and stately marble statues of George V which stand staring coldly at each other were commissioned by an Indian, H. Roy Chowdhary in 1939. One was brought here from Allahabad while the other had been installed in Lucknow itself earlier. Several of these statues are damaged. Both Queen Victoria and George V had their noses fractured during the popular nationalist agitation started by Ram Manohar Lohia in the late '50s, according to the museum director. Today they keep a lonely watch in the dry quadrangle-of-kings, frozen for eternity. —ANAND SAGAR



atues in the quadrangle of the state museum: chipped remnants of the Raj

d: Sharma said that several other marble, ripped cast iron plaques, statues of a seated Queen Victoria and an oval bust of hers made of have also been dumped in a gonesque basement room of the due to lack of corridor space. seven more busts and statues five of Queen Victoria and two of which are made either of stone, copper or brass have still to be

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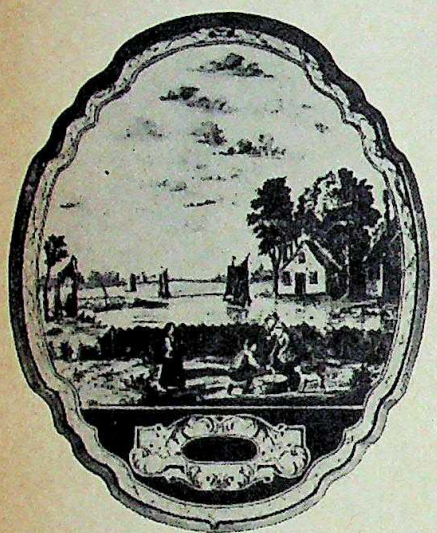
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Filling A Gap

AN ATLAS OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

by IRFAN HABIB
Oxford University Press
Price: Rs. 400, Pages: 105



HISTORICAL atlases of India have until recently been conspicuous by their absence. Cartography was in any case a largely European interest and the earliest maps of India came from Portuguese, Dutch, British and French sources, with a rare attempt in India to map topographical data. British administrators drew maps of their holdings in India among which the best known was the *Bengal Atlas* by Rennells in 1781. The earliest historical maps by the British were predictably linked to revenue information and were attempts to demarcate the Mughal *subas* or provinces, which were important in understanding the revenue administration of their predecessors.

For many decades the single widely-used historical atlas of India was that of C.C. Davis, which in spite of constant revision was too limited and elementary for the requirements of historical and geographical studies. J. Schwartzberg's *A Historical Atlas of South Asia,* which appeared a couple of years ago, was a cartographic *tour de force* with finely drawn maps in colour backed by chronological charts and insets of information put together in a splendid though expensive format.

For the major time span the emphasis was however on data relating to political history in the main, and the largest percentage of maps were of the last 200 years. The atlas by Irfan Habib differs from this in that it is concerned only with the Mughal period and can therefore provide many more detailed maps of the various regions included in the Mughal empire; further, it also introduces new data in that each political map has its counterpart in a map of the same region indicating its economic products and various other activities.

Maximum Data: Drawing on a large range of sources in Persian, Arabic and the regional languages and also on European accounts of the period, an effort has been made to map the maximum data that can be so charted. Here the Mughal period is fortunate in having the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl, which, being a detailed record of the revenue administration of Akbar provides a fund of information that is rarely [available] for most other periods of Indian history. Not only are revenue returns and agricultural products described but the information relates commercial transactions and details about castes in various areas, languages spoken and approximate population. *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire* also includes complete references to sources and on the identification of locations with indications of the identifications.

The *Atlas* provides data for a comparative analysis with the pre-Mughal period as well as the subsequent centuries. The historical maps indicate the boundaries of the provinces and the important towns associated with administration and political control, along with major settlements. Density of settlement and the rise and decline of towns can be usefully assessed from these maps.

In mapping economic data a number of marginal facts come to the surface, apart from the more substantial economic information. Thus, grape cultivation was fairly widespread in western India, an area which also had shipbuilding yards along the coast. There was a scatter of imperial hunting grounds in northern and eastern Rajasthan where the now extinct cheetah was hunted. Bihar, south of the Ganges, was relatively uninhabited, the major activity being in the diamond collecting area of Chota Nagpur.

At the level of hardcore data it is worth noticing the range of goods which passed through the towns of the upper Ganga-Doabs. The forest line in Uttar Pradesh was much more extensive and some idea of the massive deforestation of the last 300 years can be obtained by comparing these maps with those showing the present denudation of forests. The degree of economic development of different regions can be gauged. Thus Orissa is active only along the coastal strip and Assam along the river plain of the river. This adds a dimension other than the purely geographical to the mapping of changes in river courses. The distribution in south India seems more diffused and more equitable.

Not only is this at last a departure from the earlier ones in that it provides more detailed information for a particular period of history but the information itself is central to the understanding both of the history of the Mughal period as well as of more recent centuries. One hopes that historians and geographers interested in historical geography will attempt similar atlases for other periods with the same careful scholarship and a comprehension of the significance of historical geography as is evident from this atlas.

—ROMILA

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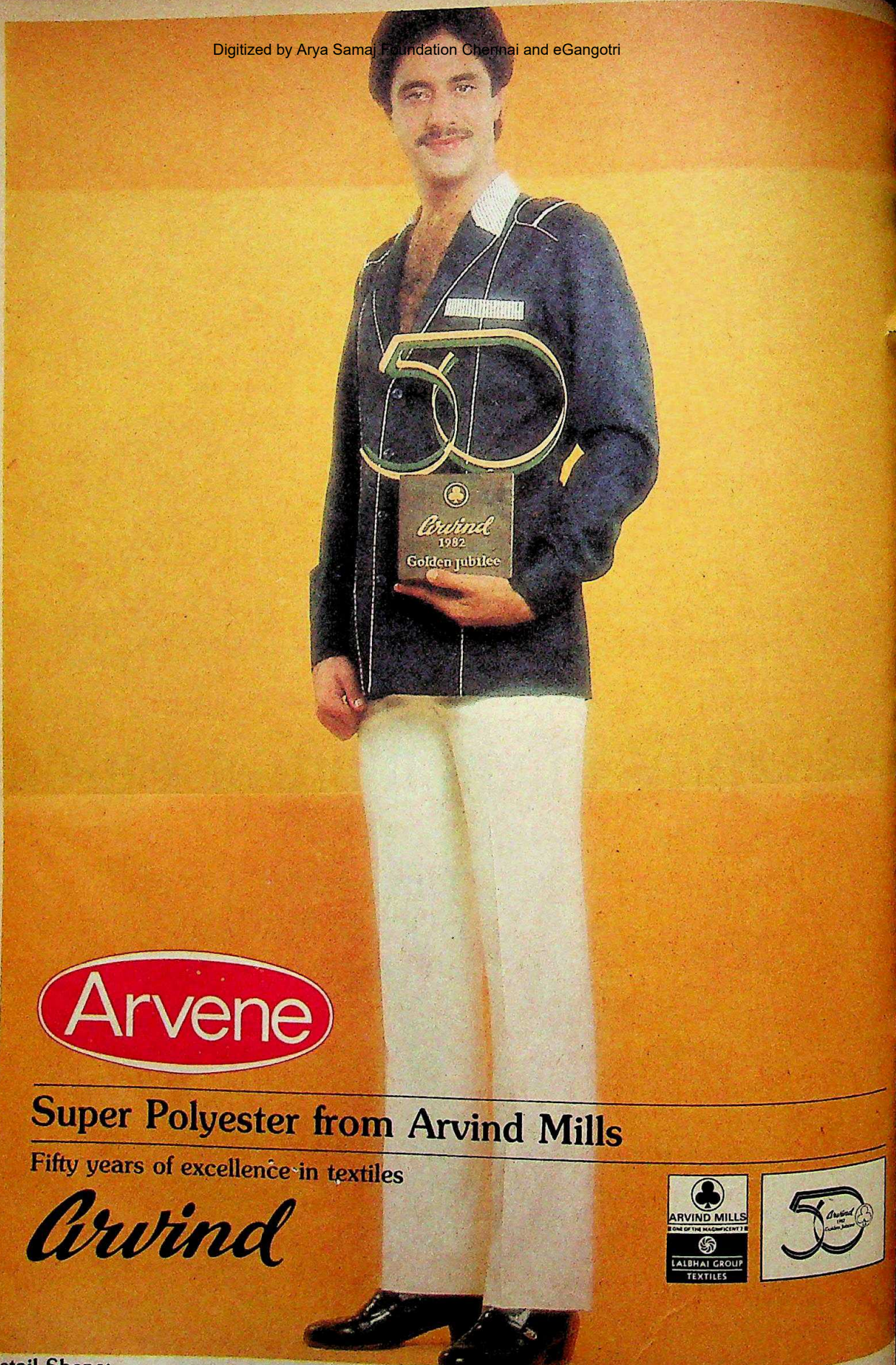
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...GARH

...ssure ...datory

...ANIMALS of Bandhavgarh ...nal Park in north-east Madhya ...sh have a very human problem: ...ve. The small, 105 sq km park ...trict has a tiger population ...d 25, thus giving each majes... ...a area of less than five square ...lays the state's Chief Wild... ...t Dutta: "In a sense the popu... ...ached saturation point." The ...ment is now working on a plan ...373 sq km to the existing area. ...densely populated Ban... ...can be inferred from com... ...the more famous Kanha ...k whose 85 tigers have an area ...m, or twice as much area for ... In 14 years of existence, ...'s growth has indeed been ex... ...it was part of the game reserve ...royal family which continued to ...hunting rights right until the ...tion. The beasts suffered the ...ere they did in other princely ...'s Maharaja Venkat Raman ...111 tigers by 1914, Maharaja ...had bagged 144 10 years later. ...Dutta: "We walked through the ...r two days just before its for... ...did not come across a single ...ss after half-a-dozen years of ...mals started drifting in on their ...joining forests, almost as if they ...the area had been set apart for ...nctuary," explains Dutta. "Their ...erms are food, water and safety. ...was protect the area and the ...ve on their own realising that the ...e from man."

...ial Claims: But success has ...s own problems. Tigers are ex... ...icular about their territory ...mark with faeces, urine and ...ves as a warning to other tigers. ...leads to fights and sometimes ...s the direct result of high density ...hough the park has been for... ...that none of the tigers has been ...manner so far.

Director R.C. Sharma also agrees ...ansion is required urgently. He ...that the "predation pressure" on ...ld because of tiger concentration ...and adds that if the area is not ...here is the danger of a crash in ...population. "Predation pressure" ...the appetite of tigers who each consume at least one spotted deer (or its equivalent) in a week.

Figures lend credence to Sharma's fears. The census of 1981 showed a decline in population of three animal species. Ninety-five barking deer were counted in 1980 and they numbered 79 in 1981. Similarly, wild boar nearly doubled between 1977 and 1980 to 235 but in 1981 dropped to 147.

But the most marked impact was apparent in spotted deer (chital) who breed rapidly to record an increase in excess of 30 per cent annually. Chital went up from 300 in 1977 to 750 in 1979 to 1,060 in 1980. But in 1981 they stood at 1,066, an almost zero increase. And it is this that Sharma thinks is disturbing.

Cattle Killed: A lack of space has also sent tigers roving into the adjoining forests outside the park since there is no barrier—natural or artificial—to restrict their movement. The easiest prey they can lay



KAMAL SAHANI/PORTFOLIO

The Bandhavgarh tiger: hemmed in

their claws on is cattle whose grazing is not permitted within the park. Under a five-year-old scheme, compensation of up to Rs 2,000 is paid for cattle killed, depending on its market value, though the average is Rs 500 per head.

In the three years up to 1980–81, 1,400 heads of cattle have been killed which works out to an average of more than a cow a day. As a result more than Rs 6 lakh has been paid in this three-year period as compensation—an amount that is equal to the yearly budget of the park.

Cattle have not been the only target. In the last two years there have been 17 attacks on villagers who live on the park's periphery, 14 of these by tigers (and three by bears) though Sharma says that it is not possible to ascertain if the animals belonged to the park or outside as the entire region is forested. In almost all cases the injured have been graziers who have bravely—and foolishly—gone to their cattle's rescue.

The expansion programme, however, is going to be a lengthy affair and it will be years before it is fully implemented. Six villages—three of them in revenue land and the others in forest land—with a population of over 1,000 will have to be shifted, a step that is certain to be met with local resistance.

By the time alternate land and facilities are provided, the cost is estimated to be in the region of Rs 25 lakh to Rs 30 lakh. The additional 373 sq km will add nearly 10 new tigers to the park population. The tiger in India has never had it so good.

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR in Bandhavgarh

NELAPATTU

Pelican Peril

ON THE Andhra Pradesh-Tamil Nadu border, off the eastern highway to Calcutta, barely 100 km north of Madras, is Nelapattu—the last colony of the spotted bill grey pelicans. On this officially protected but thinly vegetated 810 acre bird sanctuary, birds are being allowed to die for want of water.

For two breeding seasons—beginning in October when the pelicans arrive till May when they fly away—biologist V. Nagulu, 38, and naturalist-film maker G. Shankar, 33, have been studying feeding and breeding habits and filming the fascinating bird.

Now, back in Hyderabad, as the season ended abruptly, they told INDIA TODAY how Nelapattu lakeside villagers virtually killed more than thirty birds in April. For three successive nights they siphoned out water from the dammed lake to irrigate their crops leaving only puddles in the lake bed for the birds. According to Nagulu this made it difficult for this year's fledglings to live even before learning to fly.

Selfish Interest: Paradoxically, for many decades the Nelapattu villagers themselves encouraged the pelicans and other birds including storks, ibis, cormorants and herons to nest at Nelapattu. Numbering between 5,000 and 7,000 they lived as companionable fishing friends that also flew out to the Pulicat Lake barely 20 km away for feeding. For the villagers' interest there is a seemingly selfish but logical reason: bird droppings organically enrich the water turning it into a valuable natural fertiliser for their fields. In 1976, on becoming aware of this, forest department officials promptly declared it an official sanctuary though they have not been able to protect it.

The villagers argue they have a right to use the water of the lake they have bunded and graze their cattle in the sanctuary. Rains fill the shallow basin of the 204-acre lake, and water flows through five outlets to the farmlands. Says Shankar: "Surprisingly, this is being allowed even after the lake is declared

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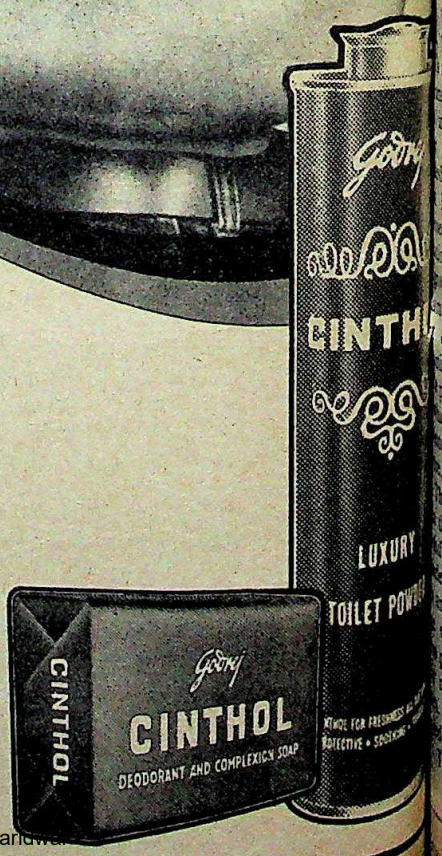
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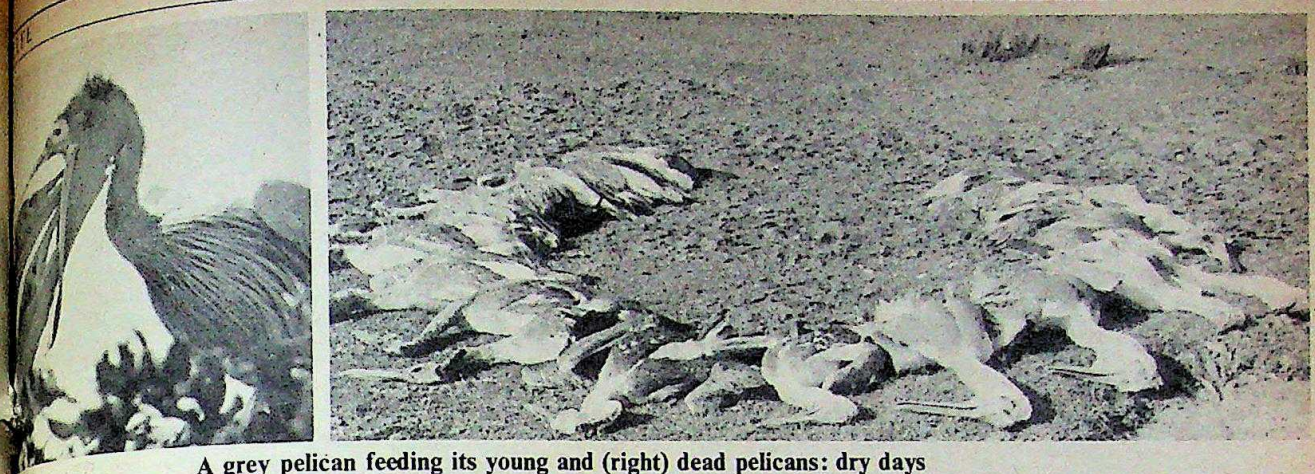
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A grey pelican feeding its young and (right) dead pelicans: dry days

Taking advantage the villagers ...ps illegally increasing the area ...g the lake waters from 170 acres ...

...t of the Nellore District Collec... to the sanctuary at the time of ...ds led to the immediate suspen... village *munsiff* of Nelapattu. ...was revoked a few days later due ...l ministerial pressures. Says ...llagers consider this their victory ...w water indiscriminately from the lake in the next season and force the birds to desert the sanctuary." Nagulu disagrees: "To protect the birds the villagers' interests also need to be taken care of. The lake can be deepened and the bund strengthened and alternate sources of water supply be tapped in the village itself."

An early solution to the problem is vital if Nelapattu is to remain a breeding station of the grey pelican. Nagulu's count shows the number of birds is up from 650 in the 1980–81 season to about 1,000 this season. Says he: "This number is poor consolation for little is known about the migratory routes and habits of the grey pelican. There are seven species but the grey pelican is found only in India and a few neighbouring South Asian countries. It is not known to breed in captivity so Nelapattu pelicanry must be developed to prevent it from perishing totally. And considering their precarious plight, like Project Tiger we should perhaps have a Project Pelican."

—AMARNATH K. MENON

...NGA

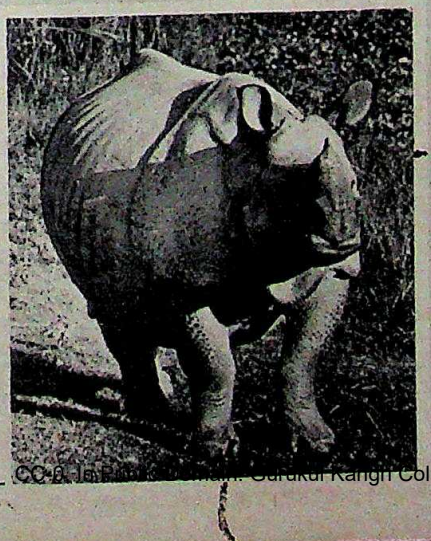
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THE ASSAM problem continues ...o fester, throwing up fresh con...roversies along its way. The la... a fierce argument against a plan ...nsfer a few rhinos from the herd of ...in the Kaziranga National Park to ...reserves in Dudhwa in Uttar ...sh and Jaldapara and Gurumara in ...Bengal. The plan is allegedly ...ed by the leaders of the Assam ...ous and vocal Assamese citizens, on ...unds that it is an attempt to "loot" ...t of its wealth, rather than to ...danger to the rhinos' health. ...mal has also featured prominently ...prolonged meetings in New Delhi ...ch the leaders have repeatedly ...ed against this move by the ...

The plan came into the forefront ...the Indian Wildlife Board sugges... ...ring these rare animals to reserves ...the state as it felt that Kaziranga, ...an area of about 420 sq km, is not ...enough to hold the burgeoning ...population—in the last eight years ...number has increased nearly 100 ...transversely, the population has ...remained static in the other reserves. ...the shifting of the rhinos was seconded by the former chief conservator of forests P.C. Goswami, who in a report had also suggested that the animals could be sold to foreign and national zoos. The market price for rhinos is approximately Rs 500,000 abroad. At present the state Government has not seriously considered these suggestions, although a recent assurance from the Minister of State for Agriculture R.V. Swaminathan, in the Rajya Sabha, hinted that the shifting would involve very small numbers.

Disputing Theory: Meanwhile, forest officials in Assam are hostly disputing the theory that Kaziranga is overpopulated, arguing that there has been no range degradation to prove this. Although a simple indicator of overpopulation in the reserve is the straying of animals from sanctuaries to neighbouring areas and the depredation of crop areas by rhinos—a common phenomenon in Assam—forest officials maintain that these incidents are not unusual and took place even when the population of the rhinos was a mere dozen. State officials have further said that there have been an increasing number of confrontations between the rhinos and other species over grazing space and this year two animals have been killed.

Rhino in Kaziranga: tricky transfer



In the midst of such fierce debates the only argument that holds some validity against the translocation is the one proffered by Chief Conservator S.D. Rajkhowa, who maintains that the shifting of rhinos from the tropical rainy climes of Kaziranga to the inhospitable environs of Dudhwa would be a disastrous decision. Dudhwa is also notorious for its poachers. Rhinos, if placed in such environs would become prime targets, primarily because of their horns, which sell at a fabulous price of Rs 100,000 in Hong Kong, Singapore and also China, for their alleged aphrodisiac qualities.

Rajkhowa himself has no objection to shifting a few rhinos to West Bengal sanctuaries, but it is doubtful whether the Assamese are inclined to be so generous.

—SEEMA GUHA in Gauhati

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Solidaire enters export market

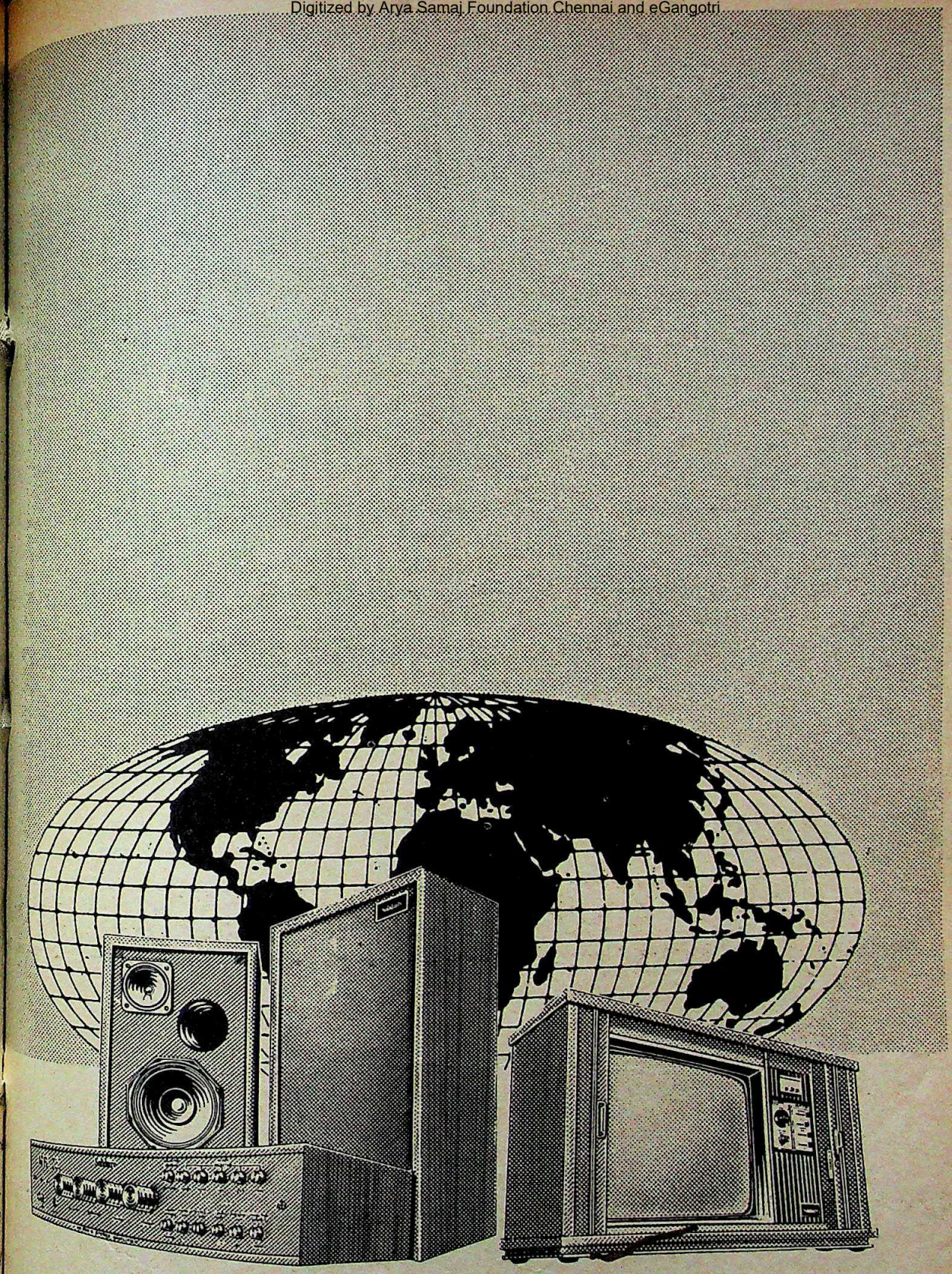
Solidaire's preoccupation with Quality has paid off. So when a world-wide marketing organisation like Dimo Ltd., selected Solidaire from India to compete with other leading international brands, to start with, in Sri Lanka, it came as no surprise.

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A boy worships a modern *Shakti*

SON VALLEY

Stone Age Shakti

THAT TRITE phrase 'as old as the hills' has suddenly taken on startling significance in relation to a thread that runs through Hindu beliefs: the cult of mother-worship, a veneration of the *shakti* form that harks back to primeval times. Recently, an Indo-US team of archaeologists working in the Son valley in Madhya Pradesh's Sidhi district stumbled upon evidence that this practice existed in prehistoric, Stone Age India.

Situated near the base of the Kaimur escarpment, 4 km north-east of Medhauli village, the site had been excavated first in 1980 by Professor J. Desmond Clark of the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), and Professor G.R. Sharma of Allahabad University. Last January, the site was reopened by their understudies, UCB's J.M. Kenoyer and Allahabad's J.N. Pal.

Astounding Find: Towards the end of this year's excavation, the archaeologists were lifting large numbers of Upper Palaeolithic stone artefacts (between 30,000 and 10,000 years old) when they came upon a rough circular platform of sandstone rubble, about 85 cm in diameter. In the centre of this platform was a fragment of a natural, ferruginous stone which had concentric triangular striations etched into it. The fragment stood out from the rest of the circle's stones because of its unusual colours, ranging from a light yellowish red to reddish brown, in alternating bands.

Front view of the reconstructed stone



Intrigued by these features, archaeologists cleared more surface and found nine more fragments of stone. All the fragments joined to form a triangular stone 15 cm high, wide, and about 6.5 cm thick.

It seemed as though some stone worshippers had deliberately placed stone in the circle's centre. The excavators' interest quickened when they found that stones atop the Kaimur escarpment

Ancient Origins: The archaeologists have conservatively estimated the platform's age to be about 11,000 years. That—as Sherlock Holmes' Watson would say—is amazing, because Hinduism, as we know it, began to take shape with the compilation of the Rig Veda in the 2nd millennium B.C., and Tantrism, with its worship of the mother-figure on a pedestal, took root even later—around the 5th century A.D.

The Son valley find indicates that the impulses that shaped the religious beliefs of the Indus civilisation must have been those of a past that was aeons distant, a past that reduces modern man's life to a single sneeze of eternity.

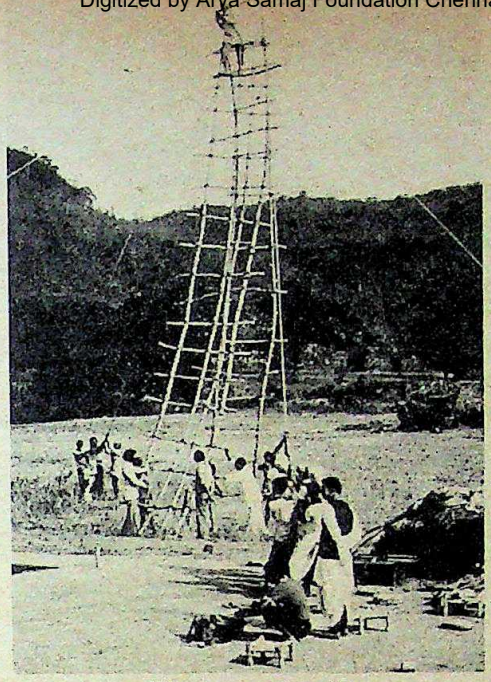
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...m does not tear its hair out ...rtance of its find. "Archaeo- ... says cautiously, "we can ... the platform was built by ... people had placed a certain ...lourful stone in its centre."

...ealls that soon after the stone ... fight, a passerby stopped and ...why he had broken the stone, ...ply'. And the archaeologists ... excitement, that the Kol and ...habiting the area use the same ...ular stone even today as a ...ir mother goddess, Mai. ...ncidence after coincidence fell ...haeologists' laps. Their site ... Kol, had actually set up a ...to Kalika Mai with one large ...ne and three smaller ones.

...spurred on by their discovery, ...to search for more evidence, ...ke called Karai, a kilometre ...the site, found a stone shrine to ...A rough circular platform made ...ne and limestone rubble blo- ...ne centred around a headless, ...figurine of what the locals call ...'. Also placed on the shrine ...al pieces of sandstone, all with ...tangles or ellipses—with the ...as as the fragments at the dig.



The excavation site

The tribal worshippers of Angari Devi had daubed the stones with rough *sindoor*.

Unbroken Link: What is astounding in itself is the fact that the tribals of the region practise a pagan animism that has remained unchanged for 11,000 years. But the Medhauli stone fragments suggest that worship of the symbolic *yoni*, or *shakti*, the manifestation of female energy, had beginnings in a misty past when bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers roamed the peninsula in quest of food and shelter.

The latest find may be a reiteration of the woman's pivotal position in those ancient groups. The mother was then truly a goddess: she looked after the family, gave birth to progeny that increased the tribe's numbers, and protected her offspring. Later, in more recent centuries, she took on other forms—the demoniac ruler of natural forces, the creative half of the supreme deity, or the bloodthirsty Kali who demands sacrifices in order to strengthen her creativity.

That is not all. The Son valley shrine could well turn out to be the oldest ever found in the world. Neolithic mother-goddess shrines from the late Stone Age (around 3,000 years ago) have been found near Jericho; but they are modern compared to the Medhauli find. For now, says Clark, he and his team-mates are going to investigate ancient and modern literature concerning the worship of the mother goddess, and Sharma will embark on a study of the oral traditions of the local people to find out whether folk memory retains a glimmer of the cult's primeval origins.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG

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...e Icon Age

...RCHAEOLOGISTS, as diggers, ...re constantly at the mercy of ...the vicissitudes of fortune. A ...of the Archaeological Survey of ...dia demonstrated this by its recent ...very of a unique Buddhist icon in ...sh Pradesh.

...construction workers dug the ...ation pits for the renovation of the ...ramalingesvara temple at ...rtham in Prakasam district they ...gly peeled away a layer of his- ...om beneath the dust of centuries ...earthed an exquisite limestone ...e, red polished ware sprinklers ...ots and some large-sized bricks. ...ing upon these the ASI team led by ...Krishna Murthy, superintending ...ologist, identified the sculpture ...the course of an exploratory trip ...area in March.

...excited Murthy explained that ...nographic traits, the idiom of the ...re and nature of the stone were ...and compared with those in ...ers to identify and date the icon. ...pointers were provided by the headgear, the countenance, the attire and information in the Tibetan historical work *Manikambum* and other texts glorifying the *Bodhisattva* as the first God to issue out of the primordial Buddha.

It has thus been dated conclusively to the early second century A.D. as the earliest extant form of *Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara*. The first mention of the *Bodhisattva* is in the *Sukha Vati Vyuha*, a work dated 100 A.D. Murthy says that "its worship in this and other forms was later adopted elsewhere. A common feature of all is the presence of a lotus in one hand." Found in an area rich in Mahayana treasures, "the icon suggests the Mahayana school existed even in the early second century and the Ramathirtham temple is possibly standing over the mound of an early Buddhist centre".

Bodhisattva: idol worship



The Mahayana philosophy and precepts introduced Buddhists to idol worship including the image of Buddha and the transition from the Hinayana to the Mahayana school began with the worship of *Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara*. Buddhists believe the *Avalokitesvara* takes numerous forms to lead people to *nirvana* and a legend refers to 333 incarnations. Paintings of as many as 108 forms are at the Machhindra Vahal monastery in Nepal.

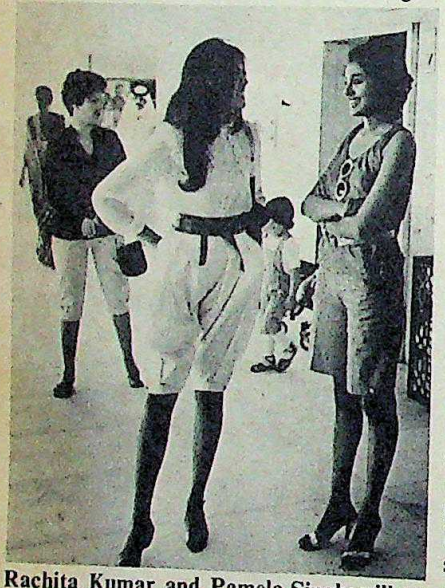
Meanwhile Murthy and other archaeologists are in search of Pothalaka where the worship of *Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara* is believed to have begun. Some scholars tend to identify Pothalaka with Potharlanka in the Divi area of Krishna district. Says Murthy: "We have to dig deep and wide and with incredible luck we could stumble upon it."

—AMARNATH K. MENON

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■ Hsss... the scene is being set for *Octopussy*... 007's latest adventure-punched roller-coaster ride—to be partly traversed in India. And Bond has sent his production bunch packing to pick a few Indian beauties before they get down to the business of shooting.... on film of course. Last fortnight, the casting directors of the film were face to face with an impressive line-up of sexy young nymphettes—18 of Bombay's most beautiful, the brightest, the creme de la creme of cheesecake catwalkers—all set to be chosen as sidekicks to Bond's girlfriend in the film. The dazzling line-up included fashion models Shymoli Verma, Rukhsana Todiwala, Tina Razdan, beauty queens Pamela Singh, and Rachita Kumar, ravishing ad film maker and ex-model Valerie Agha and starlet Nisha Singh. While the beauties chew their nails and wait for the results—only half-a-dozen are required—production executive of the Bond thriller, Charles "Jerry" Juroe, is busy fixing up shooting schedules at various locations. He disclosed that a lengthy sequence of the film will be shot in Udaipur's Lake Palace Hotel, where the bikini-clad Indian nymphettes will presumably cavort with, the yet to be cast, Bond's girlfriend. The man with the licence to kill does not seem to be destined to make the grade with native beauties—unless of course a strange twist takes place in the storyline.



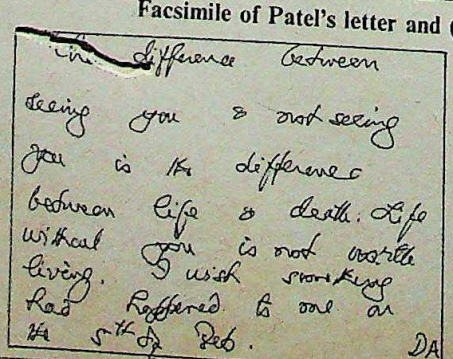
Rachita Kumar and Pamela Singh: will we make it?

■ It begins with the "most beautiful relationship" and ends up with brickbats hurled at him in the rumour-hungry film magazines. And ironically it is the most sought-after selection process in the hurly-burly film world of Bombay. Star producer **Dev Anand**'s periodical hunt for a new face and a figure to blitz the screen always makes waves. Having donated Zeenat Aman and Tina Munim to the film world, Anand last fortnight ended his now-famous search and weeded out a nubile Bengali beauty, **Natasha Sinha**, 17, to star opposite his son Suneil, 24, in his forthcoming venture, *Anand Aur Anand*. On June 18 Sinha, fresh out of school, plump and dusky, will face the bright lights for the film's first shooting stint. She plays a college freshman in the film, which also stars Dev Anand. Judging by the response that Anand received out of his earlier finds, Sinha will in all likelihood shoot to the top of Bombay's celebrity sweepstakes. Said Anand proudly: "People scoffed at me when I introduced Zeenat and Tina. But when they saw them on screen, they were all floored. Natasha will be the biggest star of the decade." She might well be but will there be peace for Anand thereafter.



Sinha: top of the bill

■ The story so far: On New Year's Day 1980 a glamorous, celebrated Indian dancer met a celebrated barrister-politician in Bombay and both fell instantly in love with each other. As their romance turned into a raging but secret love affair it turned out that the barrister was slowly dying of cancer. Now it can be told: Last month as he finally succumbed to the fatal illness, the dancer was preparing to publish a sheaf of some 50 love letters the two had exchanged into a book. Says **Protima Bedi**, 34, whose past passions have included ex-husband actor Kabir Bedi and classical singer Pandit Jasraj, of her two-and-a-half-year relationship with **Rajni Patel**: "It was a unique love the like of which I have never known. He



Facsimile of Patel's letter and (right) the couple together: celebration of love



was every... a beloved... sense of... Out in pa... month, B... book is ... personal ... hopes it ... as a love ... member ... who want ... what true ... is. Sampl... Protima ... fore his ... difference ... eing you ... seeing you ... ference be... and death ... greeting ... earlier birth... tima was mo... in her ... simply said... Birthday, S...

SIGN POS...

■ **Resigned:** P.N. ... chairman of the India... and Pharmaceuticals... sudden decision to ... taken the Petroleum ... surprise.

■ **Promoted:** Lt ... Mohan, managing ... Mohan Meakins as ... and deputy director ... ritorial army.

■ **Awarded:** Dr A.J. ... Delhi physicist and B... commissioner and sec... the Assam Governm... two-year Nehru F... Award. The fellowship ... monthly stipend of ... and an annual grant ... 10,000 towards contin...

■ **Appointed:** P.K. ... as the chairman of ... Trading Corporation ...

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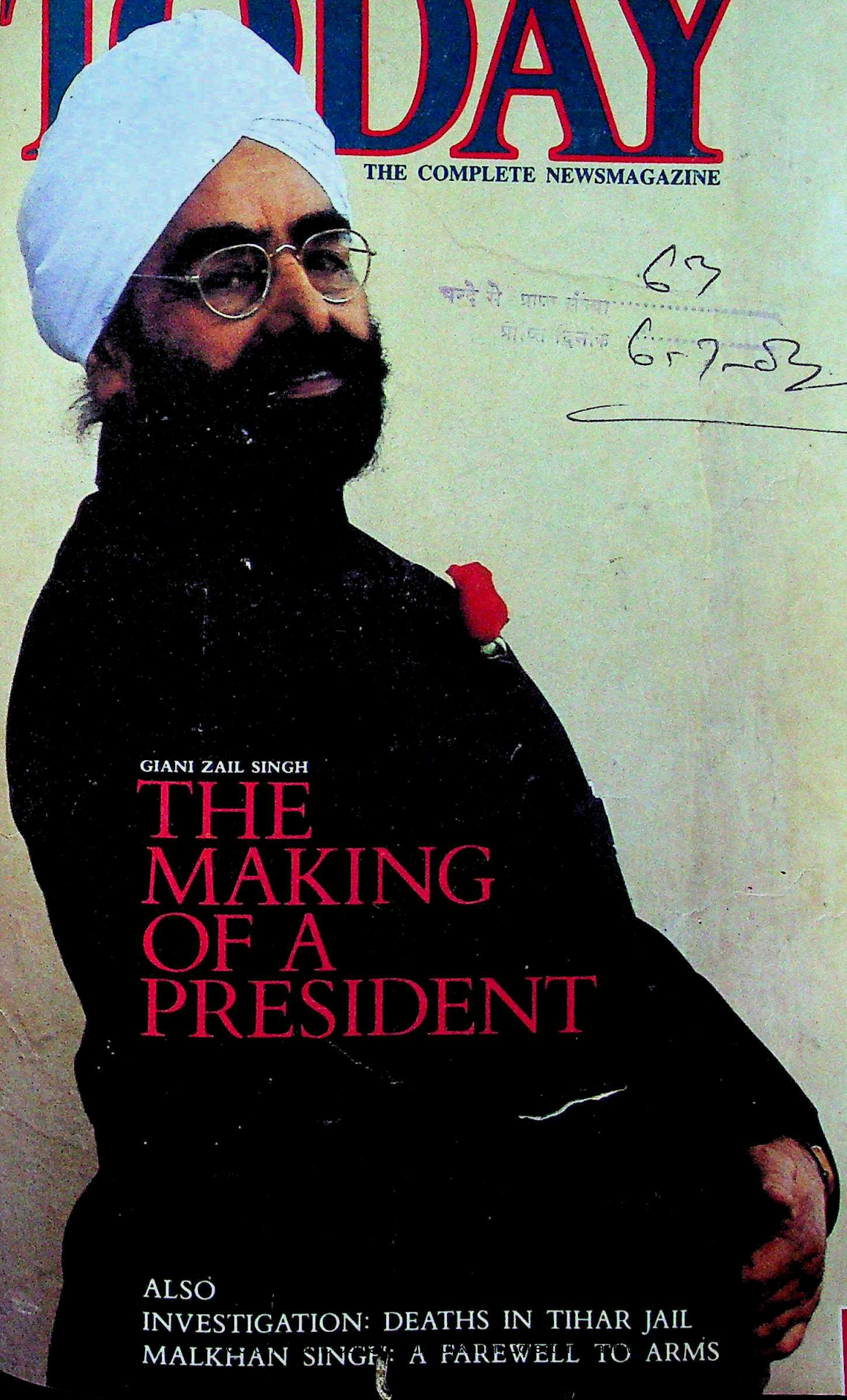
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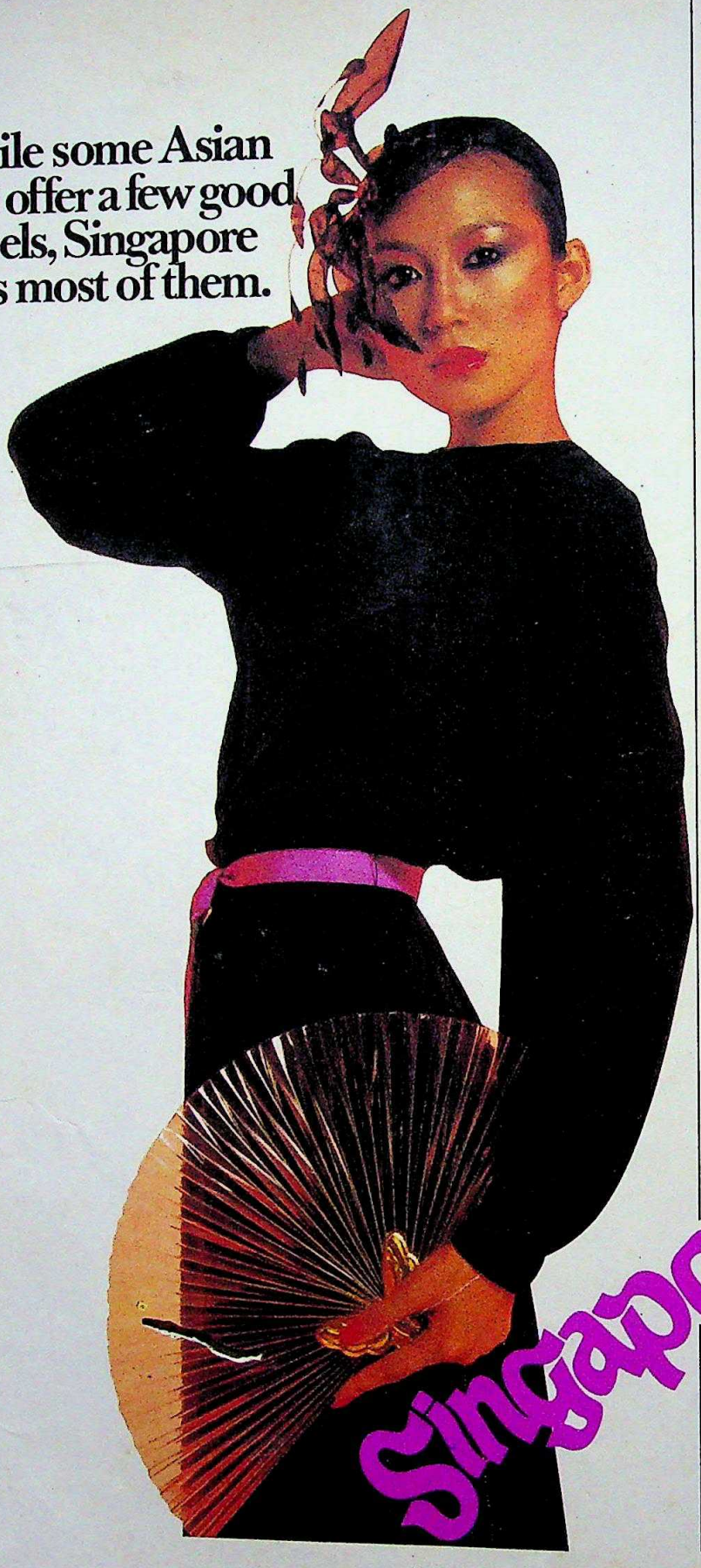
GIANI ZAIL SINGH

THE MAKING OF A PRESIDENT

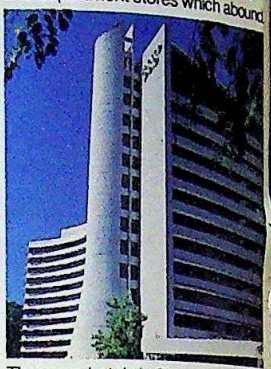
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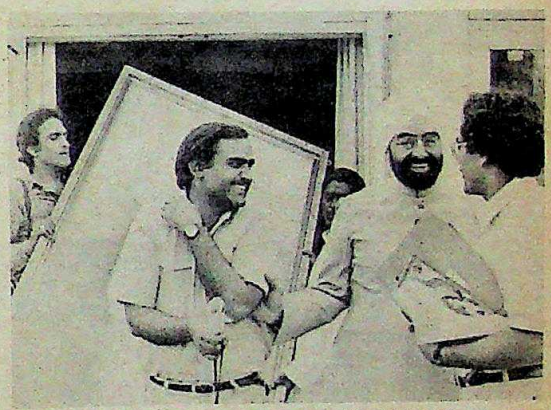
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

FOR A profession which depends so substantially on dealing with unpredictable and often random events, journalism frequently needs more than a bit of luck to help it along. Often, dogged pursuance of story leads, hints of enticing facts, lead to frustrating impasses. Much research and investigation frequently result in dead ends. The final product so often depends on events falling into place that there's an almost fatalistic dependence on the unexpected lucky break. So it has been with INDIA TODAY *and Giani Zail Singh. Singh has long seemed ideal subject matter for a cover story. He is a striking and colourful personality, a man of a heart-warming earthiness whose exuberance sometimes escapes the bounds of reason. Yet even when that happens, as it did when he chose to praise Hitler in the Lok Sabha some weeks ago, it only enhances his media attraction. The occasional* faux pas *and the growing catalogue of 'Zailisms' notwithstanding, he has played a central role in Punjab and Sikh politics and is one politician who has progressed in just one direction: upwards.*

For all that, there never seemed to be just the right moment at which to put Zail Singh on the cover, no event to which he was central, no development that could be laid at his doorstep. Still, in the hope that something would crop up, INDIA TODAY*'s staff spent several hours talking to him, researching his background and accompanying him on tour to see him in action. Singh also gladly endured a photography session with Picture Editor* RAGHU RAI. *In fact, the story was all but written just waiting for the appropriate newspeg on which it could hang. The announcement that Zail Singh was the Congress(I)'s candidate for this month's presidential election clinched the choice of this fortnight's cover story.*



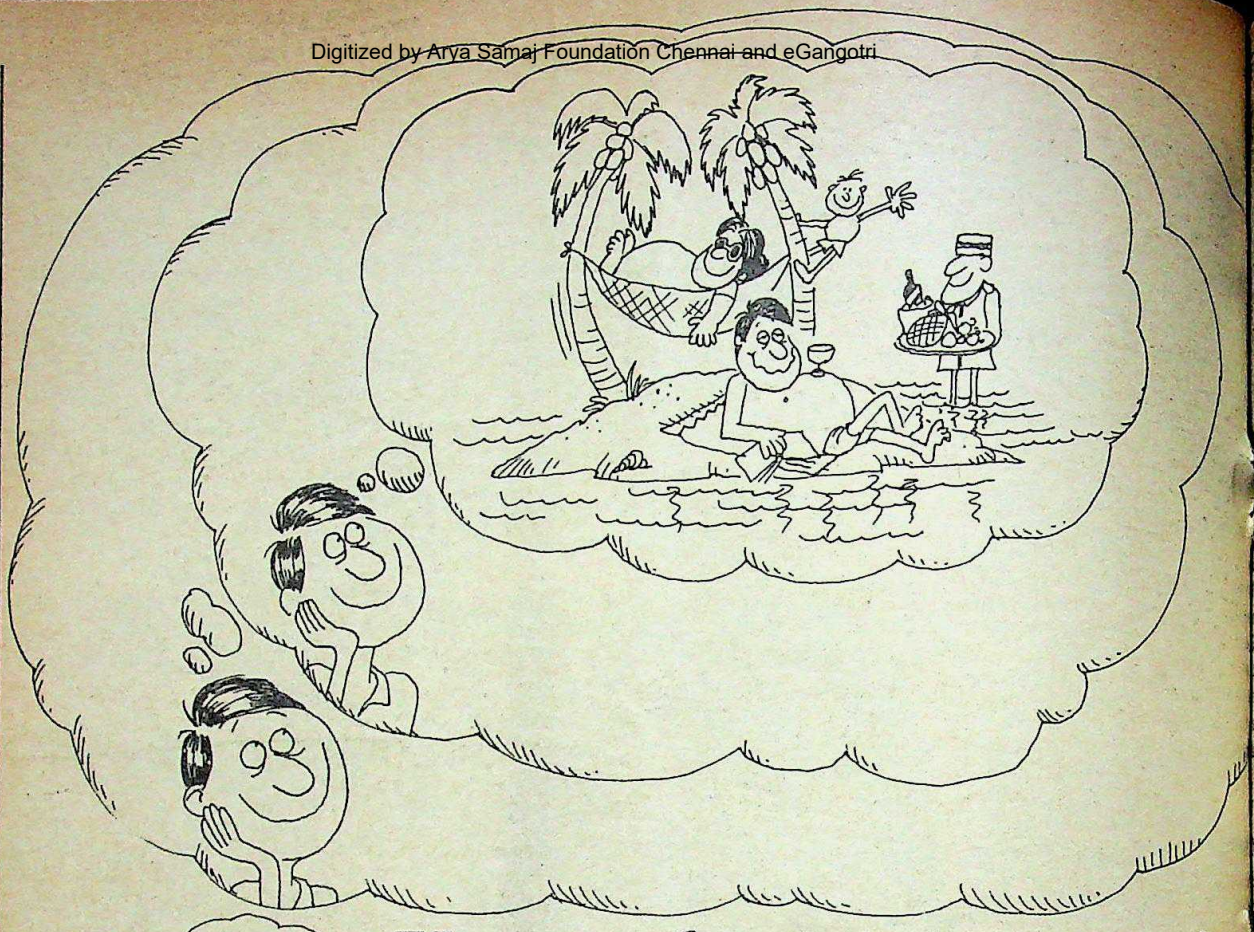
The INDIA TODAY team with Zail Singh

QUITE the opposite train of events occurred in this fortnight's investigation into deaths in Tihar Jail, which far from falling into place had to be tracked stubbornly over a span of several weeks. The first hint that there was more to the large numbers of prisoners who have died in the capital's biggest jail came in the form of an answer to a parliamentary question. Following up on this, Correspondent PRABHU CHAWLA *began to put together the details of each case to see if the rules laid down for such events had been followed. Talking to a wide cross-section of people that inevitably are involved, Chawla pieced together a report which raises serious doubts on the veracity of the authorities, and casts a grim light on the dark world of prisons.*

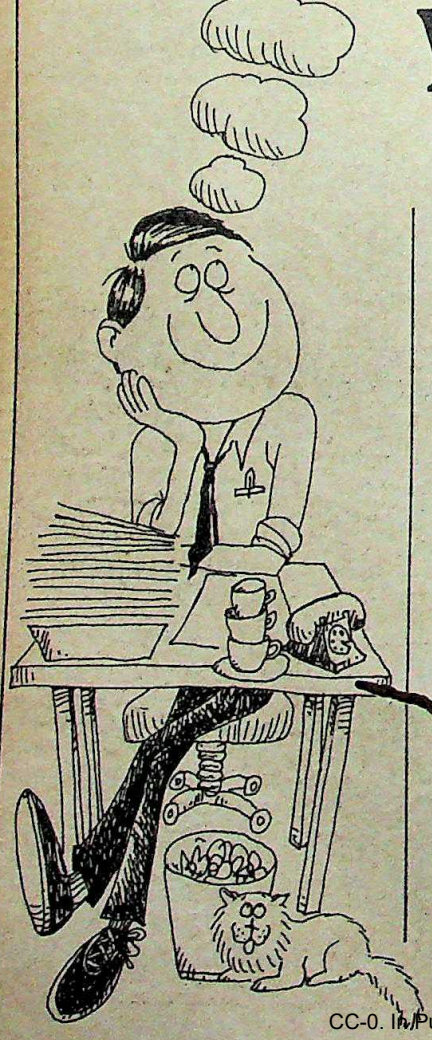
PRISONS, at the moment, are a sensitive subject for two other members of the staff—Correspondent CHAITANYA KALBAG *and Photographer* PRAMOD PUSHKARNA *who were confronted with Haryana's baton-happy police last fortnight. In Chandigarh to cover the crucial first day of the Assembly, Kalbag and Pushkarna were lathi-charged by the police while covering the event and threatened with jail till they produced their credentials.*

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MES VINDICATED

ver story, "Race Against Time" inted out rightly that it is not just men who are the heroes of the es—it is also the people working e scenes. The article also proved ge expense incurred to hold the quite justified in the face of the gains that Indian sport has been

Jaimin M. Bhatt

ING A FRIENDSHIP

ticle, "Taming The Tigers" (June s that relations between Prime dira Gandhi and President J.R. e are "not all that friendly". ly, no reason to doubt that the ations between these two leaders but normal. Secondly, the history ional relations teaches us that the terest of countries is of para- portance. In this case, it is in the terest of both India and Sri Lanka te closely in rooting out violent movements which challenge tional integrity and the tary democratic framework which friendly neighbours have pre- their independence.

T.B. Panabokke
High Commissioner
of Sri Lanka

ING FOR ALL

ver story "Mid-Term Warning" roved beyond a shred of doubt wer of Mrs Gandhi's charisma is e. It is a pity that this has not been to a growth in the Opposition's t the most heartening thing we from the state elections is that the has come of age—they use their wisely and can no longer be taken ed.

Geeta Balasubramaniam

til the shameless horse-trading stops ery is not going to have any respite problems. One wonders for how long average citizens will put up with this terrible state of affairs. When their endurance breaks all hell will be let loose.

Shillong *T.O. Pugh*

■

The election results should be regarded as a mid-term warning by the Opposition more than by the ruling party. It is ominous for them that though the Congress(I) is torn by dissensions it could still make a good showing. It is time our national opposition parties took lessons from the Marxists in West Bengal on how to keep the Congress(I) at bay.

Madras *C.T. Vairavan*

HELLISH HARYANA

After reading "Governor's Disgrace" (June 15) I feel ashamed to live in a country of which Haryana is a state. People like Bhajan Lal have made a mockery of all democratic conventions and it is amazing that he has got support from New Delhi.

Bombay *L.V. Ramchandra*

■ Though the ruling party's conduct in Haryana has been contemptible one must also condemn the Opposition's unseemly conduct. It is shocking that the Governor, no matter how deplorable his actions have been, should be manhandled by legislators. The office, if not the man, must be shown some respect. Isn't it time to ponder where Indian democracy is headed to?

Lusaka (Zambia) *Dr S. Dayal*

■ G.D. Tapase has violated every tenet of democracy as well as the spirit of the Constitution and has proved that he acts on the direct orders of the Centre. Today the politicians are the most corrupt segment of society and yet it is they who will administer the country though they are morally unfit.

Rohtak *Mukesh Sharma*

NUMBERS GAME

The contention in "A Winning Combination" (June 15) that the BJP supported the Congress(I) is incorrect. The BJP fielded 69 candidates and supported two independents in constituencies where the UDF was also standing. To complete the evidence: the BJP put up candidates in both the constituencies where the Congress(I) leader, K. Karunakaran, was standing. And one of the leaders of the BJP has been quoted in the local press saying that the BJP would rather support the LDF to form a government.

Ayroor *Oonikrishnan Nair*

EXCEPTIONAL MATTERS

In the article on the presidential elections ("A Tricky Choice", June 15) it is

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stated that the vice-president invariably becomes the choice for the Presidency and this has only one exception—B.D. Jatti. This is not true as it occurred in the case of G.S. Pathak too.

Rewa *R.K. Indurkhya*

■ *Though this is strictly correct the difference lies in the circumstances. B.D. Jatti was not elected President although he still held the office of vice-president and this was a deviation from precedent. G.S. Pathak and V.V. Giri retired at the same time.* **—Editor**

■ As this report pointed out, the choice for the Presidency must be through consensus. We must have a President who will be above party politics and be a person that all sections of the country can respect.

Madras *K.S. Ganapathy Subramanyam*

A GREY WORLD

The article "A World Apart" (June 15) on the Ranchi Manasik Arogyashala reinforced my belief that the real heroes of the place are the ones, who against all odds, have groped their way back to sanity. I have been a patient of three asylums, including this one, but now not only can I fend for myself but I am also able to support my family. In fact, today I work at the Arogyashala as a psychiatrist though I am an ophthalmologist. It would be easy to withdraw or be escapist but I have learnt to face the world with courage.

Dr J.E. Jalil.
Deputy Superintendent
Ranchi Ranchi Manasik Arogyashala

■ The conditions prevailing in Asia's largest mental hospital reflect the plight of the poor in all developing countries where they remain forever at the mercy of callous and irresponsible governments. It is reports such as this one that are the only rays of hope in their "grey world".

Reading (UK) *Jatin I. Desai*

■ The photographs were superb—each told its own story and could stand independent of the text.

Ahmedabad *Dr Bharat Vakharia*

■ Lunatic asylums are plagued by governmental indifference, public apathy, outdated laws and misconceptions about mental health. The comments in the article on the elector-convulsive therapy (ECT) fit into the last category. ECT is a safe therapeutic measure and is the mainstay of doctors working under the terrible conditions in our mental hospitals. ECT cannot cause the death of brain cells nor can it coagulate enzymes. It only causes a subjective memory loss and confusion, both of which are transitory. Under conditions of careless administration it can cause the singeing of hair, superficial burns and worst of all, fractures or lung infections. Deaths are extremely rare.

Dr D. Ram
Institute of Psychiatry,
Madurai Medical College &
Madurai Government Rajaji Hospital

FAMILIAR METHODS

The events described in "Quick Quacks" (June 15) are all too familiar. What is terrible is that all too often these quacks get patronage from local politicians and hence from the state Government. It is heartening that these cases are getting coverage in the national press.

Calcutta *Lt-Col Dr S.C. Ghosh*

PLEADING A CAUSE

The article "Murdered For Asking" (June 15) was excellent. Rarely has a journal exposed the terrible conditions prevailing over here. The Government is deaf and dumb to our pleas—only the press can expose our misery.

Dhanbad *Prakash Kumar Sinha*

SETTLING SCORES

The Kashmiris living in Pakistan are much better off than those in Kashmir ("The Resettlement Row", June 15). It would be wiser if Sheikh Abdullah passes bills to root out corruption and if he would clear up the red tape that is paralysing the state Government offices.

Sopore *Salim Rishi*

■ There was no Delhi Agreement in 1948, that was the year of the accession. The Delhi Agreement took place in 1952.

New Delhi *Veena Vasudeva*

WHOSE SIN?

The article "Sins Of Bhagwan" (June 15) should have been titled Sins Of Bharat. Instead of crying over how Rajneesh left for the US without paying Rs 1 crore in taxes why did the authorities not stop him at the airport? Secondly, instead of raving about the criminal cases why doesn't India extradite him? Instead of moaning over the depression that has been caused by his leaving, why was the fact that while he was here the Government got crores in foreign exchange brought in by his disciples not mentioned.

Nairobi (Kenya) *Kul Bhushan*

■ The article did not highlight certain facts and therefore misled many readers. The reasons why Bhagwan Rajneesh left the country, a decision that was forced on him, was the uncooperative stance of the Indian Government and the pressure exercised by his disciples to move from the cou... was in poor health. It has also been ... stated that Ma Anand Sheela ha... taken over the charge of the admin... Nobody but Bhagwan Rajneesh ta... decisions.

Bombay *Niranja...*

■ The article cleared up once a... the entire Rajneesh affair. It show... farce this so-called godman was... nothing but capitalise on the w... people from the West. The Indian pu... never taken in by his duplicitous wa...

Rourkela *Rana D...*

MISPLACED CREDIT

In "The Long March" (June 15) ... trans-Himalayan expedition it ha... mentioned that Sir Edmund Hillary s... he climbed Mount Everest because ... there. The remark was made by ... Leigh Mallory.

New Delhi *Wil...*

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

The article "Suppressing Dissent" ... 15) on the goings-on in BHEL just e... the tip of the iceberg. The engineers ... undertaking are badly demoralised ... management's open divide and rule ... The work conditions are dreadful an... talented people are being under-uti...

Bhopal *Parve...*

MATURE COVERAGE

The article, "Dance Of Death" ... 31) brought us happiness. Though ... newspapers and periodicals cover... Calcutta carnage, and many pours... pathy, none of the reports had the ... of this piece.

Bombay *Acharya Ranajit Brah...*

LOOKS BELIED

In the introduction of "N... Stooge" (May 31) Mrs Gandhi ha... described as "remarkably young lo... "without wrinkles" and "out of ... asana". The photographs of her ... facing page however prove qui... contrary. *J.D...*

Pune

ESCAPE ROUTE

Vasant Sathe has the right ideas ... prime time on TV with celluloid ex... anzas and squeeze in the prime minis... the ruling party's good works into ... ("The Tedium Is The Message", M... After spending the whole day grapp... insoluble problems, the least one can... the population of India is to let them ... into fantasyland. *Sucheta ...*

Illinois (United States)

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PHOTOGRAPH BY RAGHU RAI

IN FOCUS THIS FORTNIGHT



COVER STORY: Barring last minute surprises, Giani Zail Singh is poised to become the seventh occupant of the spacious Rashtrapati Bhawan this fortnight. With Mrs Indira Gandhi rejecting the Opposition plea for a consensus candidate, Singh's selection has been dubbed as an act of politicising the highest post in the country. An in-depth report on his selection and the role of the President. **Page 50**

INVESTIGATION: In reply to a question raised in a parliamentary committee recently about the number of deaths of prisoners in jails and police lock-ups, the home minister supplied the members with little or no information. However, investigations conducted in Delhi's Tihar Jail revealed that out of the 2,300-odd undertrials and convicts, 21 died in the jail's custody, mostly under suspicious circumstances. An in-depth report with case-studies. **Page 42**

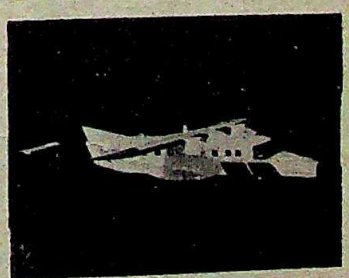




CRIME: Nine young women were burnt to death in Delhi during the last few weeks because their husbands and in-laws could not curb their greed for more dowry. Cruelty, greed and toothless legislation ensure that dowry deaths jump from one horrifying figure to another and that the murderers get away scot-free. A report on the barbarous trend. **Page 83**

SPECIAL FEATURE: Watched by thousands of cheering spectators, at a well-publicised ceremony at Bhind, Madhya Pradesh, last month, dacoit leader Malkhan Singh and nearly a score of his gang members came in from the ravines of the Chambal to surrender their arms to Chief Minister Arjun Singh. A report on the violent career of one of the most feared dacoits to prowl the Chambal. **Page 90**





AVIATION: The latest "bird" to join the impressive air "brigade" is a snub-nosed commuter aircraft called the Dornier 228. Last fortnight the Indian and the German Governments, after long and secret deliberations spanning over many years, were in their last stages of reaching an agreement to purchase and indigenously manufacture this aircraft. The story of how the deal came about. **Page 114**

CINEMA: Till recently, the prosperous south Indian film industry has been having a heyday by giving "the audience what they want"—a ready-made mix of sexual gyrations and flesh-filled fantasies which has over the years come to become a necessary ingredient of south Indian cinema. But, last fortnight the Censor Board decided that enough is enough, and set to work with their scissors. **Page 137**

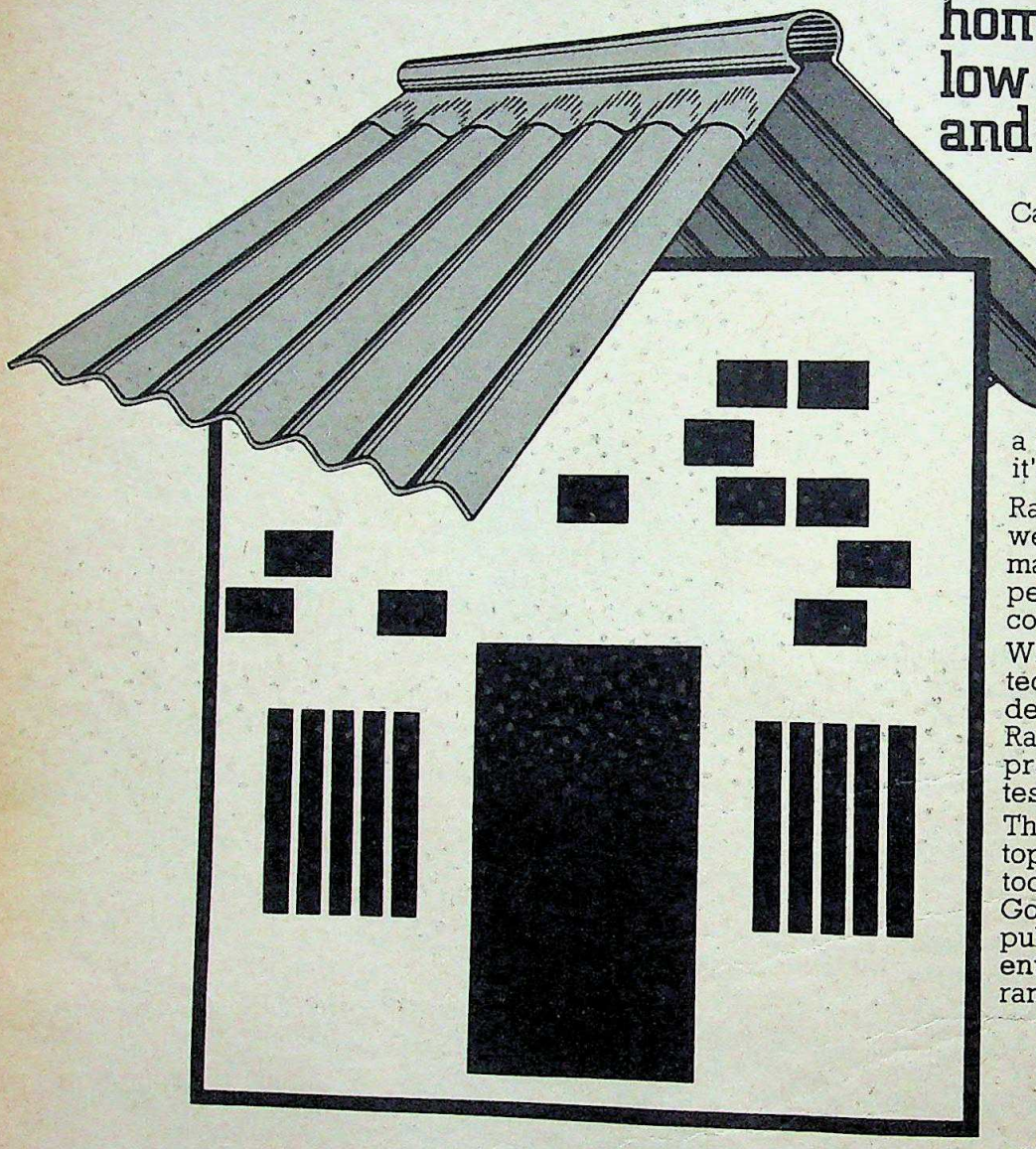


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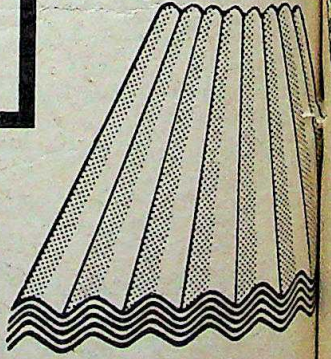
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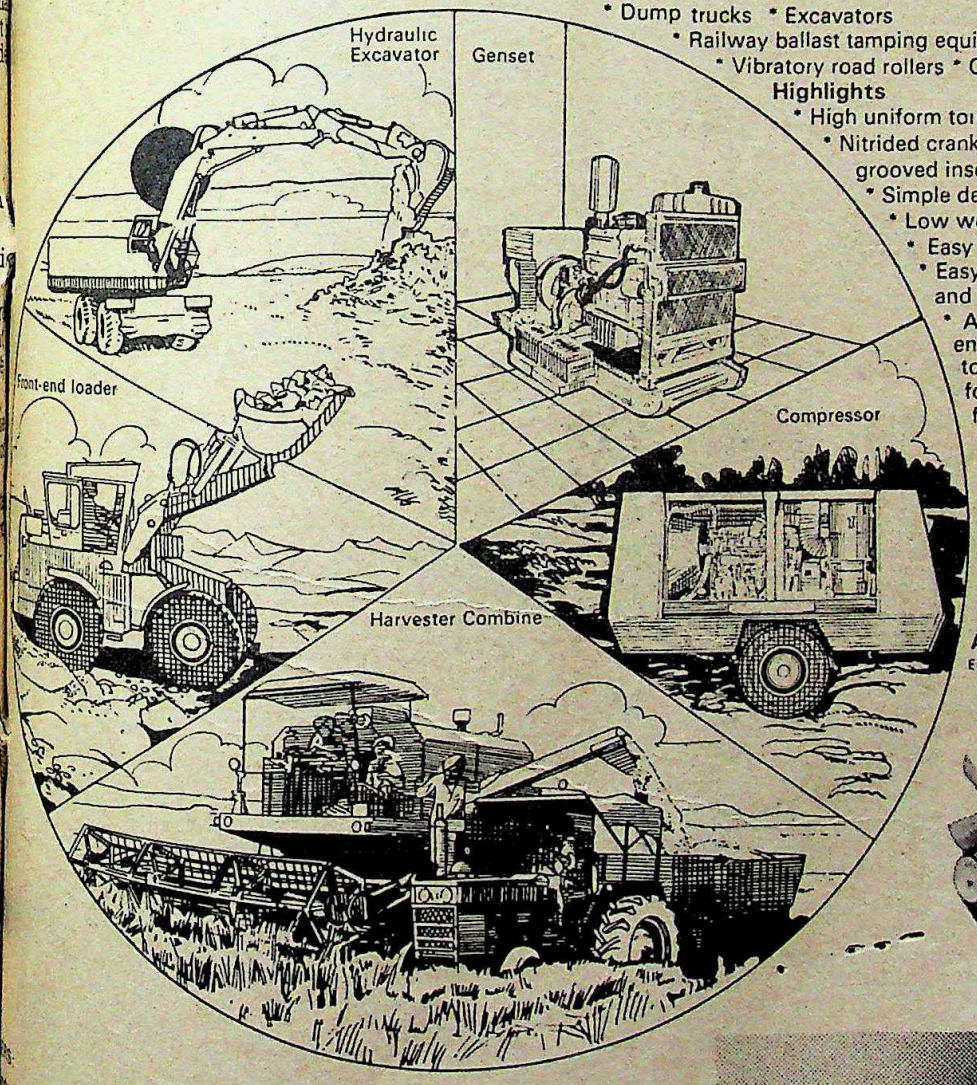
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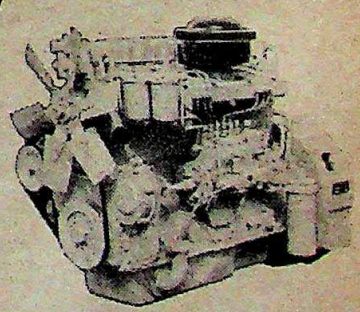


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ERSHAD IN INDIA

BANGLADESH Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) Lt-General Hussain Muhammad Ershad is likely to visit India in September. Anxious to mend fences since he took over as CMLA in March, he told Foreign Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in Dacca in May that he might stop over in New Delhi on his way back from New York where he went to address the UN special General Assembly session on disarmament last fortnight. He changed his mind later. Since it will be his first visit to India in his present capacity, he wants to make a regular official visit, instead of a brief transit one. Ershad is sending Air Vice-Marshal (Retired) A.K. Khandakar, the veteran freedom fighter who was head of the Mukti Bahini's Air Force wing during the 1971 liberation war with Pakistan, as High Commissioner to India. Khandakar is expected in Delhi in August, India's new High Commissioner, I.P. Khosla of the foreign service, will go to Dacca around the same time.

GAGGING GRIEVANCES

THE standard of discipline that was a hallmark of the country's armed forces seems to be on an unsettling wane. In the last two years, the number of service officers who have gone to court to air their grievances has escalated alarmingly. Now, in a bid to stem the tide and mute the voices of dissent in the lower ranks, the Air Force has issued a confidential circular which lays down a new and questionable interview policy for airmen. The letter, stamped confidential and issued by Air Headquarters, states that "No service right vests with any person to demand an interview with any authority. Non-grant of an interview does not amount to deprivation/denial of any service right and by itself cannot be a subject matter of grievance." This is clearly against the constitutional rights granted to individuals and in effect, prevents a serviceman from airing his complaints to higher authorities.

TIWARI'S HOME-COMING

DEFENCE Minister Ramaswamy Venkataraman will hold the Home portfolio only temporarily. Narain Dutt Tiwari, the Union minister for industry, steel and mines, is likely to be made the new home minister in the next cabinet reshuffle, due after the presidential election this month. Tiwari, 57, considered close to the

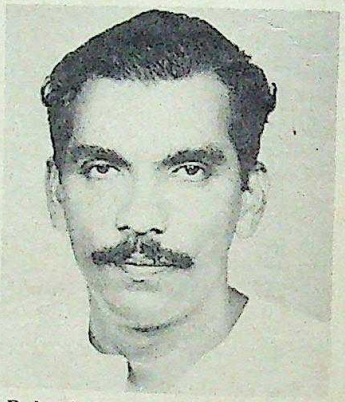


Tiwari (left) and Venkataraman: more changes ahead

prime minister, was chief minister of Uttar Pradesh during the Emergency. He became Union minister for planning and labour when Mrs Gandhi returned to power in 1980. Though holding economically vital portfolios, Tiwari is presently not happy because he feels they are politically unimportant. Further, Mrs Gandhi is satisfied with Venkataraman's performance so far as defence minister and is keen that he should return to a full-time job. Currently, he spends the mornings at the Defence Ministry and the afternoons at the Home Ministry.

COUP IN KERALA?

A STARTLING attempt was made last fortnight to bri the one-month-old Karunakaran ministry by Bab the wheeling-dealing former Education Minister in the cabinet, who belongs Revolutionary Socialis (RSP). He nearly pulle coup by enticing state Minister P.J. Joseph eight-member Kerala ress(Joseph) faction co 76-member United Dem Front (UDF) coalition. Karunakaran's one time gest ally, is not very happ the happenings in the U has of late fallen out w Congress(I) leader. Bab an ambitious politician been a legislator for the years is after the chief m chair which has eluded him all these years. But Karun who was away in Delhi at that time, air-dashed to Trivandr threatened Joseph with an indefinite period of President's the state if his party defects.



Baby John: startling attempt

THE HARRIER HASSLE

THE remarkable performance of the Royal Navy's Sea H in the Falkland war has, in a sense, been a more e advertisement for its British manufacturers than anythi duced by their advertising agents. But one prospective cu that has not heeded the message is India. When the Sea H were first offered to India, the Government only sanctioned aircraft of which two were trainers. However, under the terms deal, India was given an option to purchase more by a sp date—June 30, 1982. The Navy has been arguing, quite right six Harriers are hardly an effective number for its aircraft c the Vikrant, but the Government dawdled over the decis whether to buy more. With the option date having expire future purchase of Harriers will incur an escalation clause s at least 10 per cent more. With the Harriers having themselves in naval combat, India might have to pay a heavy for indecision. Senior Navy sources say that the minimum of Harriers they would require would be one squadron w total of 18 aircraft. Strangely enough, the curtailment navy's requirements was partly the fault of the Air Force, w pressurising the Government for some Harriers of its own type that the Royal Air Force has.

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...(Sheikh Abdullah) ages he looks more like a chinar tree in winter with the ...nowfall on its crown... He does not seem to belong to this age...
—*Quark in* Sunday Review

...Gandhi has money. She became a goddess overnight after committing ...How? With money.
—*Charan Singh in* Weekend Review

...dream for myself is) that when I am gone people should say that he was an ...man.
—*General Zia-ul-Haq in* Sunday

...(G.D. Tapase) has sold himself for money. He took 10 lakh rupees for the dirty ...d. He has no face to show.
—*Devi Lal in* Onlooker

...re are just two people who do not read newspapers—Indira Gandhi and I.
—*Dhirendra Brahmachari in* Probe

...ections can be more entertaining than wars... The main purpose why wars are ...is to provide people with television news broadcasts every bit as interesting ...ast thriller from Hollywood or *Chitrahar*.
—*Rajendra Puri in* The Hindustan Times

...m now a setting sun...
—*President N. Sanjiva Reddy speaking at a gathering at Satara*

...body gets into advertising on pur-...ly—it's full of accidental arrivals ...in what they laughably call the ...part of it.
...thor *Salman Rushdie in* Debonair



...political process has shown itself to ...ically incapable of correcting, con-...or coping with politicians of Mr ...'s ilk which it itself breeds in the first
...ar Malhotra *in* The Times Of India

...Amita Malik the interview is not really an "encounter" but a ...on...Having cornered your man, it is perhaps too much to expect that you ...confront him. Therefore you celebrate.
—*Iqbal Masud in* The Illustrated Weekly Of India

...like a mughal or maybe even a dacoit. What I fancy, I take! Rajesh (Khanna) ...he belongs to me...
—*Devyani Chaubal in* Super

...ally don't know what is a political film. Beyond a point you cannot make a ...film or criticise the party in power...you just cannot do it in India.
—*Satyajit Ray in* The Sunday Observer

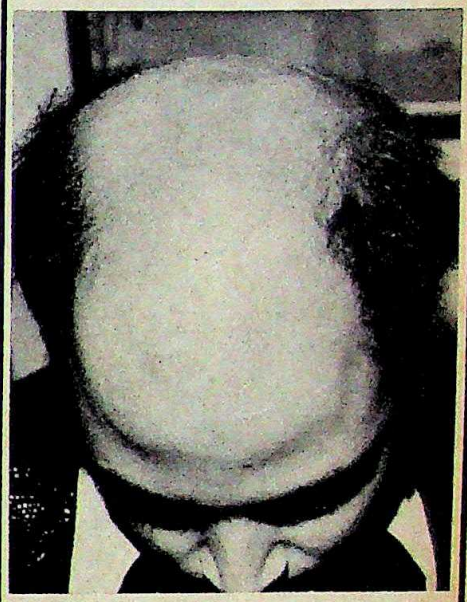
...here is the need for me to work in a blue film? I have neither the perversity nor ...worry to do so!
—*Kamalahasan in* Star & Style

...feel sorry for Rajiv Gandhi. Imagine having Amitabh Bachchan come to the ...to receive you and knowing that the crowds are there to see *him*!
—*Bitchybee in* Celebrity

...dia is too big a country to let its actions be determined, Pavlovian style, by little ...an...Pakistan is a country which we could overrun in three weeks and absorb in ...years...
—*Ravi Rikhye in* Gentleman

...am not an unofficial envoy of Mrs Gandhi. She does not need one.
—*London businessman Swaraj Paul in* Current

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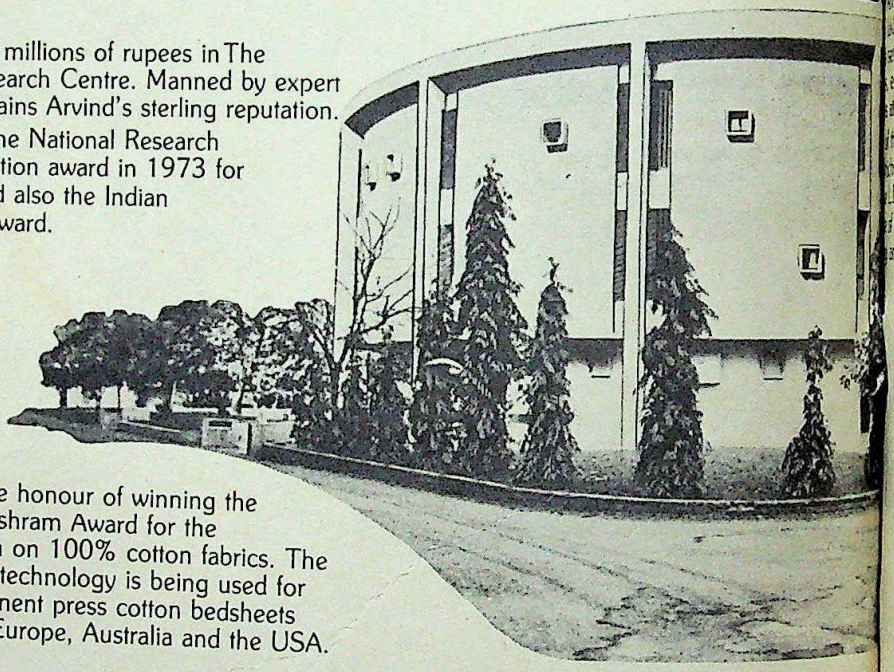
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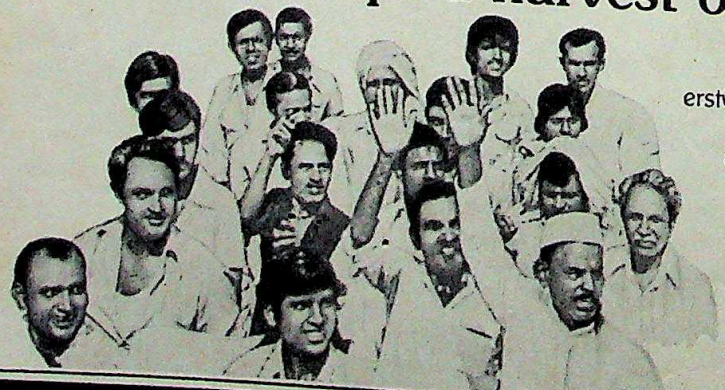
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could go back to work. That alone h
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to set the mil

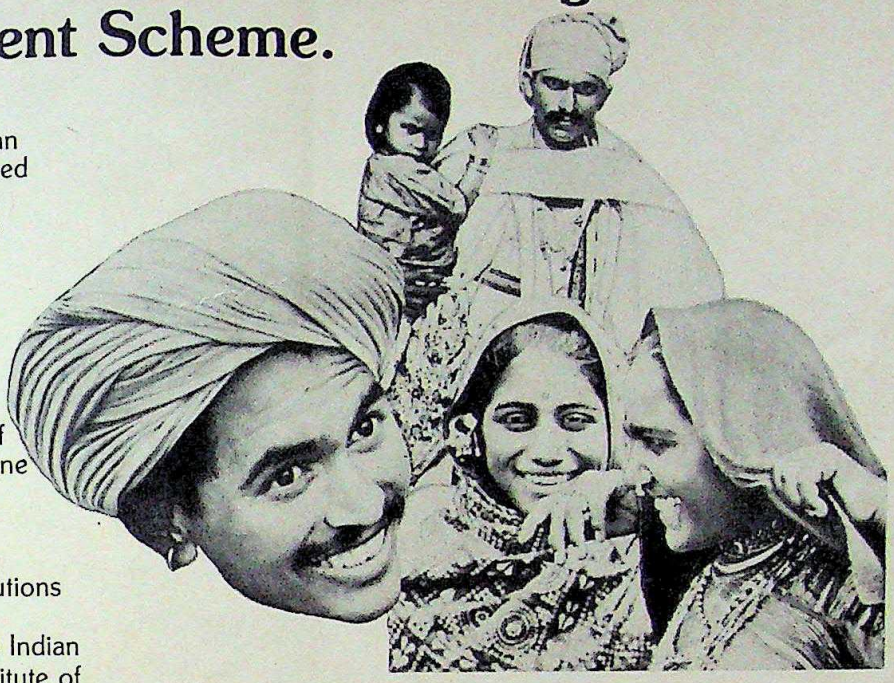
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COSTLY ATONEMENT



■ A young man in Ludhiana, Punjab, asked two women the name of a movie—and ended up paying Rs 3,000 for the privilege. It happened this way. The results of the recent mini-general election were being broadcast over television, interspersed with a few Hindi films for comic relief. In the evening, two sweeper women were returning home after a day's hard work and discussing the film to be shown when a young man leaned out of a window and asked them the name, teasingly, of course. They brandished their brooms and asked him to come down to hear it, but the shy fellow was reluctant to oblige them.

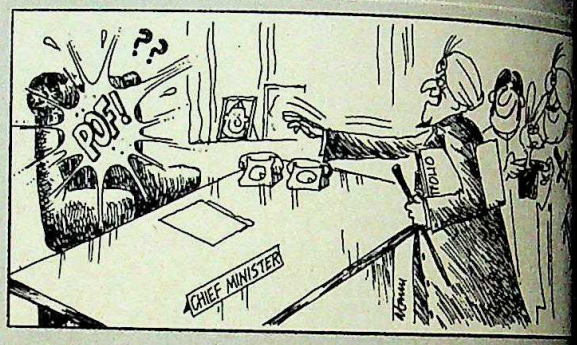
He hadn't heard the last of it, though. The next morning, 100 broom-wielding sweepers accompanied their two insulted comrades to the house. Raising a resounding chorus, they penetr courtyard and proc throw their weight water, and sewage making the place loo garbage truck had bur der on the spot. Des reception committe young man still ref come out, but his did—with 5 kg of *nim* and Rs 3,000. Only t the army leave, bless ther, son and the comrades.

MAGIC MESSAGE

■ When a magician comes to dinner anything can happen. Goa Lt-Governor Jagmohan and state Chief Minister Pratap Singh Rane discovered this recently. They were hosting a dinner for a visiting group of Uttar Pradesh journalists. A magician, Madan Kundu, also came along and after dinner some entertainment was called for, which the magician took upon himself to provide.

He took a message to the journalists by Jagmohan—the usual "nice-to-have-you-here-and-I-hope-you'll-come-again" kind—and proceeded to go into a trance, wave his wand and mutter something incomprehensible, possibly in Switzerdeutsch.

When Jagmohan and Rane were given their message again it had been transformed from an effusive greeting to a document appointing Kundu the chief minister of Goa. He was also authorised to appoint his brother magicians ministers. Jagmohan and Rane smiled and laughed, but in the madcap state of Goa politics, some enthusiastic liticians might just see in magician's prowess the wa topple their rivals in po



MENACING CATCH



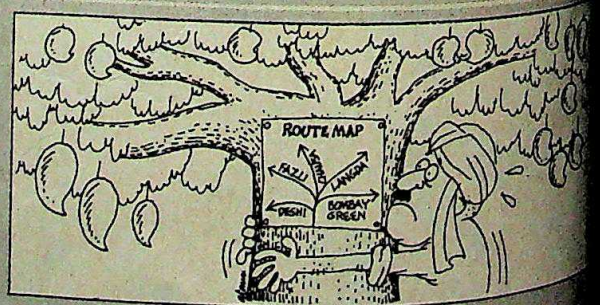
■ Sharks are the terrors of the seas, yet the crew of a fishing boat in the seas off Lakshadweep islands caught a number of them with their bare hands, as if they were hauling so much driftwood out of the water. The boat and its crew had actually gone out fishing tuna, 5 km off Kavaratti island, and laid out lines for tuna, using pole and twine. Soon, sharks attracted by the tuna converged on the boat, until the water around was alive with them. The tuna were frightened away and the sharks lost their temper—they started ramming the boat.

The fishermen, instead of heading for the hills, decided to make good use of the situation and put out a few tuna-baited lines which soon hooked some sharks. others moved in even clo which point the crew about fishing lines an centrated on the hundr tail-fins protruding abo ter. They simply haul sleek menaces of the with their bare hands. the end of one-and hours their arms were fit to wither. But the bo knee-deep in 240 shark

SWEET SUCCESS

■ Production is the key word in this year of the Lord 1982, in India at any rate, and a farm in Hoshangabad district in Madhya Pradesh has established some kind of a landmark. One local breed of mango tree is now producing five different varieties of mangoes. 'Langda', 'chausa', 'Bombay green', 'fazli' and 'deshi' mangoes are growing in brotherly harmony on the same tree, giving local mango lovers a quite indecent choice of the juicy, lip-licking fruit.

The experiment began on the Silari farm a few years ago when people got a little tired of the monotony of one tree producing only one kind of fruit. Light bulbs flashed in minds and saplings of the different varieties were planted and later grafted onto the local tree. At first, the tree refused to turn off the beaten track, but a few months later it was clear that the transplant had been successful and that the tree had agreed to become a surrogate mother. Soon the 'langdas' and the 'chau pened and the farmer the sweet—and sour—t five-flavoured success.



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...e Bhajan Bludgeon

THE SPRAWLING city that Charles-Edouard le Corbusier had designed for bureaucrats and retired people looked like an army encampment girding up for an enemy onslaught. As the moment of conflict neared, ...'s streets were gradually cor... with bamboo and steel barricades; ...taking in the Punjab, Haryana ...territory secretariats, the legis... ...els, and the Assembly building ...ed under Section 144, and every ...was closely checked. Said a long-time ...citizen: "There seem to be no ...rights left in this city. Bhajan Lal ...it into his personal property, and ...searched as though every one of ...onist or rioter."

...Lal's trial of strength scheduled ...4, when the Assembly was con... two-day session, turned out to be ...ic. The massive deployment of ...al machinery ensured that only ...000 Devi Lal supporters could ...a fortified Chandigarh to attend ...ed in the Assembly the following ...Bhajan Lal's nominees for the ...p and deputy speakership, Tara ...Ved Pal, were elected with a ...e margin—with 48 votes in fa... 40 against in the 89-member ...By hook and by crook, Haryana's ...minister had successfully hung ...er.

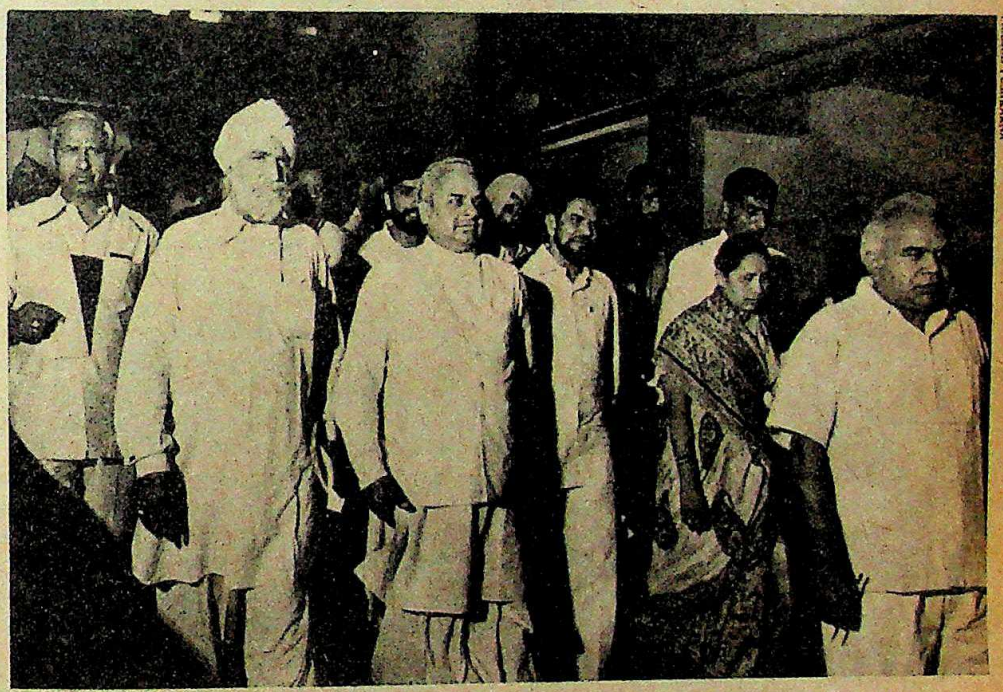
...t parties—the Lok Dal, the ...Janata Party (BJP), the Janata, the ...), the Congress(S), the CPI (M), ...and the Akali Dal (Longowal ...set up a Save Democracy Commit... ...June to wage a populist battle ...Bhajan Lal. The committee's ...Devi Lal set out on a state-wide ...ping up support in every town he ...with fiery speeches against the ...ent. When he exhorted his fol... ...reach Chandigarh armed with ...stones for the rally, fears were ...that the storming of the capital ...violent and uncontrollable.

...dia: In the ensuing weeks, the ...Government moved with a para... witnessed even during the ...ey. Chandigarh was occupied by an ...army of paramilitary forces. At ...,000 men from the Central Reserve ...force, the Border Security Force, the ...Armed Constabulary of Uttar Pradesh, the Haryana and Punjab armed police forces, and the two states' civil police, along with those of Chandigarh, moved into battle positions in and around the city.

Despite the overkill, a sizeable crowd did turn up for the Opposition rally at the parade ground in Sector 17 on the June 23. For more than three hours, the audience patiently listened to, and repeatedly cheered, a galaxy of leaders from every party as they made full-throated speeches attacking Bhajan Lal and his patroness Indira Gandhi. Haryana was pictured as the doomsday precursor of a nation-wide crackdown on democracy. Congress(J) President Jagjivan Ram and Lok Dal Chairman Charan Singh, who had flown in that morning, promised that the struggle would not end with the Assembly session, and that Haryana would become the focal point for a nation-wide movement much as Bihar had, at Jayaprakash Narayan's urging, defied an authoritarian Centre in 1974.

The next morning, an hour before the Assembly met at 9 a.m., a large procession set out, armed with freshly-cut bamboo staves, on a protest demonstration. Led briefly by former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal, the demonstrators were permitted to pass through the first cordon. But the police repulsed an attempt to break through the second barricade, inside the area under prohibitory orders; the lathi-charge was fuelled with all the savagery of a pent-up force that had been denied violence, and at least 80 people were injured, some seriously.

Special Scrutiny: Outside the Assembly's ungainly and slapdash building, a huge police force stood poised to halt any attempted storming. Each incoming car was searched for trouble-makers, and the convoy carrying the Opposition MLA's was subjected to special scrutiny. Worse still, at least 100 toughs, reportedly belonging to Bhajan Lal's Bishnoi community, had been recruited for the two-day session. Under the garb of



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

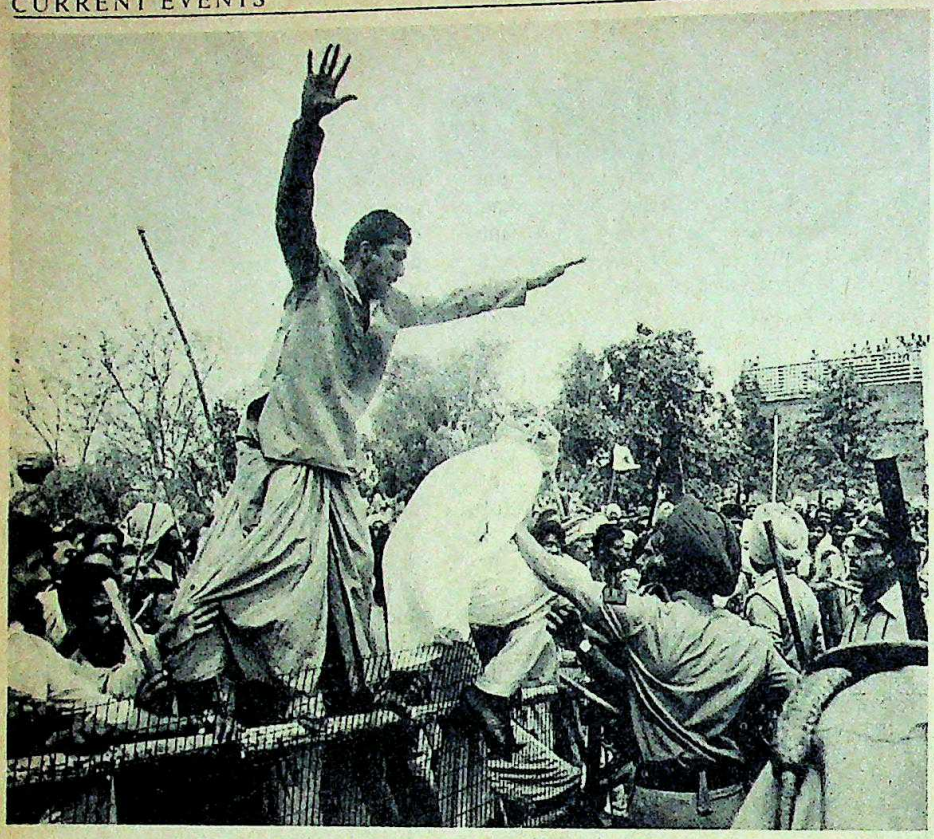
Bhajan Lal (third from left) leaving the Haryana Assembly: show of muscle

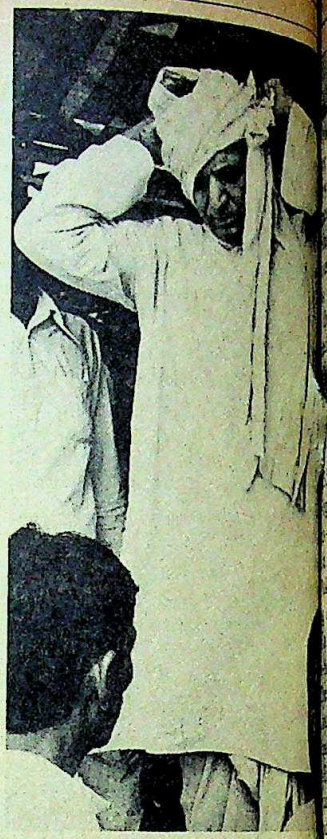
Watch and Ward staff, they checked every visitor's identity with scant delicacy. At least 30 of them were even posted inside the Assembly chamber, behind the Opposition benches.

Aside from jeering and catcalling by the Opposition every time a defector MLA was sworn in, there was little other drama inside the House. The anticlimax peaked when Governor G.D. Tapase arrived to deliver a short and perfunctory address. The Opposition rose to its feet and, waving pieces of black cloth and showering choice abuse on Tapase, kept up a constant barracking of the diminutive head of state. Throughout the tumult, Tapase grimly mumbled his speech, while the Congress(I) MLA's smiled smugly at

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Demonstrators leaping over the fence to confront policemen at Chandigarh and (right) a weary Devi Lal

the Opposition's antics.

Said Devi Lal after the day's session: "The fight to unseat Bhajan Lal will continue to the bitter end. I was born to fight, and I will fight this impostor." Retorted Bhajan Lal: "My position has been vindicated. For one month Devi Lal had been inciting Haryana's peaceful people to violence. He is shameless—he has joined hands with Badal, whose Akali Dal is obstructing the Beas-Sutlej link canal which will bring valuable water to the state. Devi Lal is an enemy of Haryana."

Frantic Manoeuvring: The manoeuvring that went on throughout the month preceding the Assembly session was frenetic, and each side tried desperately to hang on to its MLA's and entice more from the "enemy side". Bhajan Lal was far more successful in this than Devi Lal. Using a mixture of threats and cajolery, he kept his men on a tight leash. The best Cabinet posts went to defectors, and there were rumours that loyal Congress(I) men, resenting this, would cross the Assembly's floor on D-Day.

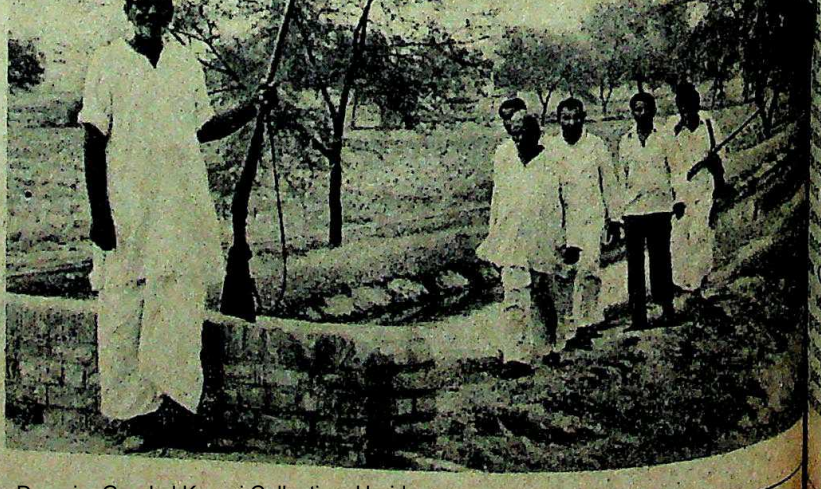
But Bhajan Lal succeeded in luring three more Opposition MLA's to the Congress(I) fold before the session opened—Vijayvir Singh of the Congress(J), Azmat Khan of the Janata, and Mahendra Pratap Singh of the Lok Dal. Mahendra Pratap's switch in particular was very bad news for the Lok Dal. A follower of Bansi Lal, he had been expelled by the Congress(I) and fought on a Lok Dal ticket reportedly at his mentor's behest.

The mending of the fence between Bhajan Lal and Bansi Lal was signalled when the latter's son, Surinder Singh, was hastily allotted the agriculture portfolio on June 7. But the Lok Dal won some retribution when Bansi Lal's daughter Sumitra Devi, the same day, joined hands with Devi Lal in protest against the chief minister's amoral politics.

Expectations that the Bansi Lal group of MLA's—numbering eight—would desert the Government at the crucial mor fuelled at the Chandigarh rally mitra Devi spoke emotionally of that had made her join the Oppos father has not objected to my ac told the crowd.

Precautions: Bhajan Lal had been busy keeping his men Congress(I) MLA's were lodged house at Morni, 55 km from C and cordoned off from the outsid police pickets. There was also

Armed escorts for Lok Dal MLAs at Teja Khera



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...for the defectors. The powerful ...e allegiance to Union Agriculture ...Rao Birendra Singh was said to be ...because Bhajan Lal had taken its ..., former speaker Colonel Rao ... under his wing. The chief minis... ...avoided the possibility of this ...cross-voting by not giving Ram ...speakership again; instead, he ... Ram Singh with the home ...

...Lal had not been idle either. While ...d support for the rally, the 32 Lok ...s were housed at his farm at Teja ...30 km from Chandigarh. There, the ...slators were lavished with earthly ...good food, outings to nearby ...where Devi Lal was born, and the ...istan border, Hindi movies every ...on a video screen, and the tender ...30-man contingent of guards toting ...re shotguns and sophisticated ri... ...guards, said the legislators, were to ...nders out. But it was clear that no ...ld step outside without an armed ...ery morning, the legislators bathed ...nals criss-crossing Devi Lal's huge ...d repaired to farmhouse to smoke ...play cards, and listen to the radio. ...e happy Boy Scout camp, with ...s swearing eternal allegiance to ...

...ermined: Said Hari Chand Huda, ...f the MLA's in the camp: "Public ...has made us even more determined ...Bhajan Lal. We have become like ...Added Hukam Singh, an indepen... ...had joined the Lok Dal after the ...: "Bhajan Lal has been conducting ...Haryana Bhavan in Delhi. Tantra ...get him a majority."

...the grim fact was that only eight of ...Dal MLA's were sitting members; all ...had been voted in for the first time. ...they can resist Bhajan Lal's blan... ...remains to be seen. As for Devi ...major hope is that the chief minister ...er or later run out of favours and ...to confer on his followers, and that ...ng party members would then cross ...join the Opposition.

...re are reports in Chandigarh that ...ngress(I) High Command has pro... ...untled partymen that Bhajan Lal ...eplaced by a more 'acceptable' chief ...the moment matters cool down and ...ernment is firmly in the saddle. For ...ent, it seems inconceivable that ...Gandhi can dispense with Bhajan ...services: he is the genie in the ...ress(I) lamp, ready to keep each legis... ...ppy, a renegade fisher of men dang... ...bait before every weak-willed op... ...MLA.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG

AIR-INDIA

Death At Dawn

WHEN the landing announcement was made at the tail-end of Air-India's flight 403 to Bombay via Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Madras on June 22, most of the plane's 99 passengers were either asleep or dozing. Visibility was down to the bare minimum as the four-engined craft came in from the pre-dawn darkness. At 400 ft, the *Gauri Shankar* shot suddenly out of a thick cloud bank and straight into a severe squall, the fragile shell of the Boeing 707 lashed by pouring rain and near-gale winds.

The touchdown came with a jarring thump which tore off one engine and bounced the plane 50 ft into the air. Bouncing a second time the plane tilted dangerously, a wing tip scraped the ground and a second engine was sheared off its body. Seconds later it had skidded off the runway, lost its undercarriage and another engine, and ploughed at break-neck speed through the reeds and *nullahs* which flank the tarmac. When the plane smashed a boundary wall and finally came to rest, it was broken into three distinct pieces, and the tailplane area was pulverised beyond recognition.

Miraculous Escape: The *Gauri Shankar* crashed at 4.37 a.m., but it was late in the afternoon before the last body was extricated and the list of passengers accounted for. The final toll: 17 dead and 12 injured, nine of them seriously. Miraculously, the disintegrated plane did not catch fire, and of the 111 passengers and crew on board 82 emerged virtually unscathed. Among those saved was the leading Indian atomic energy scientist, Dr Raja Ramanna. Said G.N. Pandey, a passenger who escaped unscathed: "Each time we landed, both at Kuala Lumpur and at Madras, it was an extremely rough landing and we thudded down very hard. When we bounced again in Bombay I thought at first it was yet another rough landing like the other two."

The reaction to the catastrophe was surprisingly slow. For more than 12 minutes Air Traffic Control (ATC) was unaware of the disaster; the first fire tender on the scene appeared almost 14 minutes after the crash; the Bombay Fire Brigade, which finally rushed in extra fire fighters and tenders, was informed of the accident 40 minutes later; and Air-India was ignorant of it for almost an hour. Organisation during the downpour was so bad that a number of the passengers who managed to get out were forced to walk in the rain to the terminal.

By June 23, investigators from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had begun an enquiry into the causes of the crash. The next day a nine-member fact finding commission from Britain and the US arrived in Bombay and plunged into the investigation. The "black box", G-force recorders, ATC records and meteorological department records had all been seized for study. Unofficial reports suggest a few probable reasons for the crash:



The remnants of the ill-fated Boeing aircraft

► that the sudden squall affected the aerodynamic stability of the plane and forced it downwards suddenly;

► that due to poor visibility the pilot, who was under command check, misjudged and landed short of the touchdown point; or

► that the Instrument Landing System (ILS) which guides aircraft down on an electronically-controlled path, was affected by the severe rain, bringing the plane in on a lower path than is normal.

In the past year at least two accidents have taken place in heavy rains while a plane is landing, and so far courts of enquiry the world over have been unable to pinpoint the precise reason for this. Said a seasoned Air-India pilot: "The airline has sent all pilots the findings of these enquiries and pointed out the current aviation mystery which surrounds low-altitude flights in severe rain."

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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SANJAY ANNIVERSARY

Day Of The Gandhis

A mother's sorrow grows every year—it is a deep and private thing. I brought up Sanjay as a symbol of daring, dynamism and endurance. And I am sure he would not like us to waste time grieving for him, but would want us to fulfil his ambitions.

—Mrs Gandhi, on June 23

I do not approve of the 23rd of June being turned into a day of farcical tamashas, *rallies, shows of strength etc which is what is being done by the ruling party this year. It should be a day of introspection, and reassessment of what one has done for one's people in the last year.*

—Maneka Gandhi, on June 22

AS THINGS turned out, June 23 was a day of neither private emotion nor introspection. It was as blatantly public an event as possible with both Sanjay's mother and widow vying for public attention, thereby clearly indicating their rising political paranoia of each other.

Sanjay Gandhi's second death anniversary blues were evident in both camps—the Congress(I) as well as the Sanjay Vichar Manch—weeks before the day dawned. All India Youth Congress(I) President Ghulam Nabi Azad set the ball rolling with the first *faux pas*: asked at a press conference whether Maneka Gandhi was being invited to the early morning prayer meeting at Sanjay's *samadhi*, Azad belligerently remarked: "How can she be invited after her anti-party activities."

Next day the outburst was quickly papered over with a statement that anyone was welcome to attend the prayer meeting. The Sanjay Vichar Manch promptly declared the anniversary "Vidhwa Diwas" ("Widows' Day"). As posters by at least a dozen different organisations sprouted all over the capital, it was suggested that the day could become one of confrontation between Mrs Gandhi and Maneka—who have not come face to face since Maneka ... from 1, Safdarjung Road in late ...

Pre-empted: There was no pu... frontation between the two—M... empted her mother-in-law's arr... Sanjay *samadhi* by nearly two h... signs of an invidious war were e... Beginning defensively, both partie... giving each other blatant offens... *tamasha* carrying on from dawn ...

The prime minister chose ... three functions, the last being a m... rally at Parade Ground. Earlier, at ... ing ceremony of a Sanjay statue—... plaster of Paris monstrosity, paint... bronze—she declared that though ... Five Point Programme was impo... was a very small part of Sanjay". T... barb, aimed at the Sanjay Vichar ... was backed by a less than subtle ins... photographs of Maneka in the ... India" exhibition, where the s... unveiled had been removed overni... ing down the fact that Sanjay ever ... wife or son.

Worse still, political groupie A... que, the organising secretary of the ... India" ceremony, went so far as to ...

Mrs Gandhi and entourage at the Sanjay samadhi: vying for public attention



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presence in her wedding photo-
pictorial booklet of Sanjay's life
commemorate the function. Asked
ation of Maneka's photographs
exhibition and booklet was de-
declined comment. Obviously
's status now matches the fate of
g, Mao Zedong's infamous wife
eared from all public records
der's death.

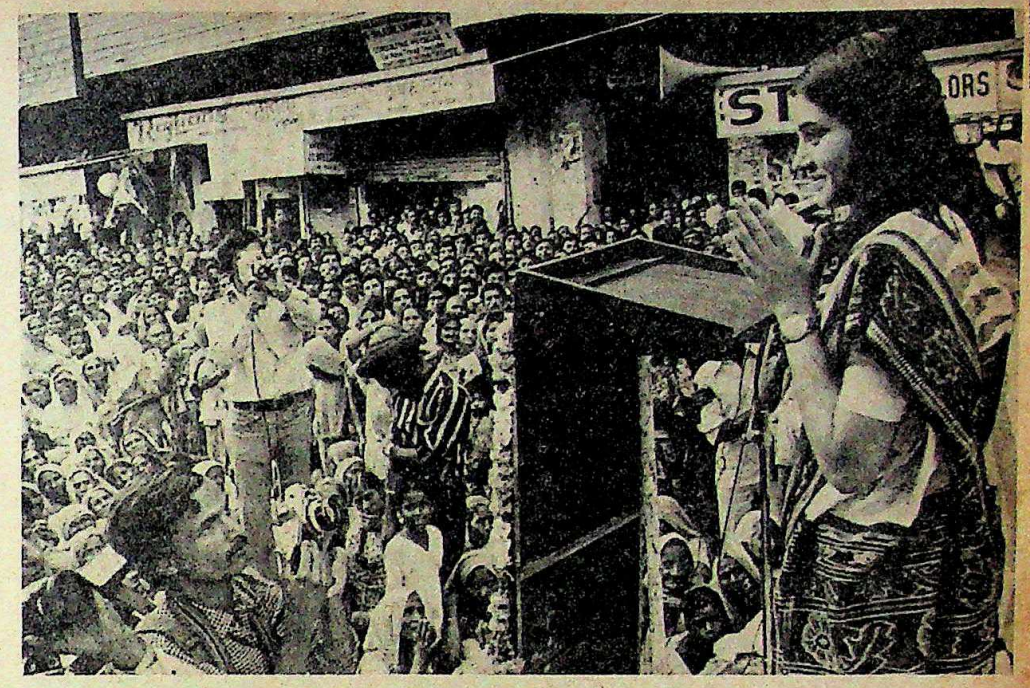
Chaos: Maneka, however, wasn't
public appearances. At exactly
time scheduled for the prime
lly at Parade Ground—she an-
st she would distribute 300 saris
a remote area of old Delhi close
rsity. Arriving over an hour late
crowd of about 1,000 women
an alley, blocked off despite the
permission by local police, her
kly degenerated into a free-for-

just returned from a large and
meeting in Baroda two days ear-
ka's first public address in the
ld neither be heard, nor could she
m, in the surging wave of women
grab free saris. Rushing through

of India exhibition: past glory



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA



BHAWAN SINGH



BHAWAN SINGH

Maneka addressing a meeting at Kamla Nagar (top) and (above) a stampede for sarees

her script Maneka had to beat a hasty retreat through the clamouring crowd. Even Akbar Ahmed, the suspended MLA from Uttar Pradesh, was forced to admit that the show was "chaotic" but he squarely put the blame on Congress(I) MP and Youth Congress leader Jagdish Tytler whose boys, he claimed, were responsible for the disturbance.

Tytler, however, didn't get very far with his little show: organising a blood donation camp outside the Sanjay *samadhi*. Tytler, together with Delhi Pradesh Congress(I) Committee President H.K.L. Bhagat, had invited Rajiv Gandhi to say a few words before giving blood. The occasion turned into raucous amusement when crowds, including a battery of press photographers, clambered on stretchers to watch and photograph Rajiv donating blood. Extricating himself from becoming an unseemly spectacle, Rajiv accompanied his mother to all public appearances scheduled for the anniversary—which, by day's end, were fast turning into a flourishing political picnic.

Whether labelled "Widows' Day" or "Son of India" day, June 23 proved to be both a "farcical *tamasha*" and a "waste of time"—in fact everything Sanjay's mother and widow swore it wouldn't be.

Cynically enough, political impulse took precedence over private sorrow; and the instinct to capitalise so ruthlessly even in mourning proved only one thing: for the Gandhis, June 23 was a day of business as usual.

—SUNIL SETHI

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MAHARASHTRA

The Antulay Strain

"Nobody is yet born, by the grace of God, who can put me in difficulty." A.R. Antulay.



THE COCKSURE arrogance had not worn off and the defiance was more pronounced than ever. Even after the two-judge bench on June 10 handed down a judgment which clearly reinforced Lentin's indictment of him last January, Antulay's swagger had not diminished a bit. Dashing to Delhi last fortnight, ostensibly to seek Mrs Gandhi's permission to take his appeal to the Supreme Court, he returned triumphantly to declare that he had no intention of giving up control of the notorious 'charitable trusts' which had led to his downfall. By mid-fortnight he had gone further, hinting broadly to a Bombay pressman that he was getting ready to stage a comeback. "I am like a runner, the best runner in the pack," he said, "who has to fall back a little so that he can surge forward again at greater speed."

Events in Bombay proved that he was seriously getting ready to make good on his boast. Dissidence within the Maharashtra Congress (I) was at an all-time high, and an Antulay-backed group of legislators broke party discipline to openly range themselves against Chief Minister Babasaheb Bhosale. Led by ex-finance minister Ramrao Adik and Antulay supporters Bhaurao Patil and Asghar Hussein, the group began a strident campaign aimed at dislodging the chief minister. Patil and Hussein, unofficial whips of the group, hectically canvassed to wean away neutrals and middle-of-the-roaders from among legislators. By end-fortnight even the most conservative estimates placed the dissident MLA's at 50, while leaders of the anti-Bhosale faction claimed they controlled up to 150 of the 236 Congress (I) legislators in the Lower House.

Dissident Activity: Pressurised by dissidents who insisted he listen to their grievances, Bhosale conceded them a full-party meeting of Congress(I) representatives on June 20. Only a day before the meet Bhosale was ordered by the party High Command to postpone any confrontation till after the presidential election on July 12. The party meeting was promptly cancelled, leaving the primed-up dissident group spoiling for a fight.

By afternoon on June 20 the move had backfired on Bhosale. Deprived of the opportunity to lash out at his administration and functioning, batches of legislators started converging on Adik's Malabar Hill residence where a full-fledged meeting of rebels began. No bones were made about the gathering, which was unquestionably to discredit Bhosale's government and launch a campaign to oust him. Among the grievances aired were:

- the administration had come to a standstill;
- Bhosale was not taking legislators into confidence or giving them positions of responsibility;
- Bhosale was unable to tackle any issue successfully, specially the five-month-old textile strike;
- Bhosale had systematically scuttled the ambitious development plans announced by Antulay's government.

In fact, however, the charges were only a thinly disguised cover-up for the general resentment against Bhosale. Although he is seen by many as an ineffectual leader, the chief minister has come down strongly on the legislator-oriented policies of his predecessor which resulted in huge cash benefits to each MLA. In a recent crackdown which has earned him the wrath of the legislators, Bhosale has scrapped a string of concessional land and housing deals offered as patronage to them, stopped all further issue of liquor distribution licences and accelerated the issue of No Objection Certificates (NOC's) for construction. Cement, another source of under-the-table money offered to legislators by Antulay, lost its market premium after the price liberalisation last Feb... Maharashtra legislators go virtua... today compared to the lucrative ... days.

Regardless of the reasons for ... satisfaction, however, the near-reb... its effect. Within hours of Adik's ... panicky Bhosale hopped into his ... Toyota and rushed to the MLAs' ... placate his flock. Perhaps for the ... in Maharashtra, a chief minister ... both the main hostel and the seco... Majestic Hotel, virtually pleading ... legislators he could muster to h... peace. Minister of State for Home, ... and Revenue, Shrikant Jichkar, ra... room to room desperately pleadi... dissident MLA's to meet Bhosale. Ou... Majestic Hotel, two MLA's turne... conspicuously and refused to spea... chief minister when he approached ...

Hidden Hand: "It does not req... great insight to recognise Mr Antula... behind dissidence in the Maharashtr... ress(I)," read an editori... *Indian Express*. Added a ... Congressman: "The ... was only cancelled ... Bhosale could not i... following which Antu... mustered. But eventu... humiliation has been ... worse. And Antulay has ... demonstrated his stre...





Antulay (left) and Bhosale: spoiling for a confrontation

SURPRISINGLY, ... lay's renewed th... dominance comes a... when by any reckon... fortunes should be fadin... his appeal to the Bomb... Court was set aside w... by Justices S.K. Desa... Rele, it was expected that the Cong... Command would finally make a m... wards regularising his trusts, an ... which it has effectively stalled for ... months. But official silence on the ... continued even after the court verd... ing to the uncertainties about ... strength which, in turn, embolde... dissidents.

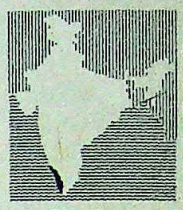
Countermoves: In an understa... ner, however, the Maharashtra Gov... last fortnight was letting it be know... would appreciate a gradual dissocia... Antulay and his activities. While a... open confrontation for fear of pr... the presidential poll. Bhosale supp... Bombay insisted that the party ... Command was gearing itself up to t... Antulay threat. Even as Antulay su... launched their 'Bhosale *hatao*' ca... stray moves in the city in fact sugge... the wily ex-chief minister was beg...

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KERALA

Building Up Pressure



LESS THAN a month after assuming office, the Karunakaran Ministry finds itself swamped by a host of controversies—some of them not entirely of its own making. Though Chief Minister K. Karunakaran is trying to put the lid on some of the decisions taken during the short spell of pre-election President's Rule, they continue to spill over, much to the embarrassment of the Governor, the chief minister and the top echelons of the bureaucracy. Says Home Minister Vayalar Ravi: "With due apologies to the Governor, some of the decisions taken during President's Rule smack of nepotism and corruption."

Controversy over decisions taken during the months of President's Rule before the election has been bubbling for quite some time now. The first hint of it came when the earlier short-lived Karunakaran ministry did not implement the Governor's decision—taken during the short spell of President's Rule that followed the fall of the Nayanar ministry last October—to appoint one more member to the already overcrowded state public service. Immediately after Karunakaran's ministry fell and the state was placed under President's Rule for a second time, Governor Jothi Vencatachellum implemented her earlier order.

Unusual Decisions: Next came the decision to reduce in bar licences from Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 1 lakh. This was followed by another decision to reduce the procurement price of raw cashew which was hardly in the interest of the farmers. This was topped by the order to revoke the suspension of the medical students alleged to have been involved in the mark-list scandal, which was conveyed to the principals of medical colleges only hours before the present Karunakaran Ministry was sworn in.



Karunakaran: held accountable

Besides these, the administration also took a controversial decision relating to the price fixed for the crown jewels and the hill palace of the former maharajas of Cochin. These had been valued at Rs 45 lakh by an earlier government. During President's Rule, the administration gave orders fixing the final price at Rs 1 crore. Said Minister for Archaeology, R. Balakrishna Pillai: "It was a big racket and I suspect there was a huge pay-off."

Even more mysterious was the decision to grant ivory worth about Rs 1 lakh as a present to the manager of the Badrinath Ashram. There are also said to have been gross irregularities in the transfer and extension orders of several officials. The proverbial last straw, which aroused more laughter than ire, was entertainment tax, exemption granted to the controversial Malayalam film-maker I.V. Sasi's political *Eenad*.

Opposition Charges: Some of these decisions have been stayed or revised by the Karunakaran Ministry. Said Karunakaran: "We will never question the bona fides of the Governor. We have nothing to complain about the Governor." But the Government stand has provoked opposition charges that the Congress(I) had a hand in all the controversial decisions taken by the administration during President's Rule. The secretaries attached to the Governor's office refused to talk to INDIA TODAY on these issues.

Karunakaran is currently under heavy pressure from all sides. The furore over the decisions taken during President's Rule erupted almost as soon as he took office. Added to that is the simmering discontent among the members of his coalition government over Rajya Sabha seat allocations and the speakership sweepstakes. It took more than a week of bargaining to decide how these spoils of office should be decided. Finally M.M. Jacob, Karunakaran's trusted lieutenant, made it to the Rajya Sabha. K. Gopalan, the rebel Janata leader who lost in the Assembly elections, was also accommodated at the last minute. The speakership finally went to Vakkom Purushotaman of the Antony Congress. It seemed that the Antony Congress was finally ready to merge with the Congress (I) in Kerala.

The merger was originally scheduled to take place a month after the elections. Antony met Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during her whirlwind election campaign in the state. The terms fixed were that Antony was to be made the president of the Kerala Congress(I) and his men were to be given appropriate posts. Despite keenness from both sides the deal fell through.

All this bodes ill for the Karunakaran Ministry. With all these goings-on, little time is being spent on governing the state. And it looks as if Karunakaran will have his hands full for quite some time to come.

—SHREEDHAR PILLAI in Trivandrum

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UTTAR PRADESH

Poppy Politics



WHEN RUMOURS that Uttar Pradesh's Minister of State for General Administration, Gulab Singh, was involved in an opium smuggling scandal started making the rounds in Lucknow last fortnight it was initially dismissed as "poppycock'. And that, as it transpired, was seemingly what it turned out to be. According to Sub-Divisional Magistrate Vinod Kumar Pathak, part of the investigating team that raided Singh's farm at Birnaud in Dehra Dun district, at least a dozen illegal poppy fields were discovered in the rugged tribal tract. At another spot, 65 km away, three more poppy fields were found, spread over an area of about nine acres. One of three first information reports (FIR) filed by Chanchal Singh, a patwari who accompanied the raiding parties, named Gulab Singh as the prime accused and of being a joint owner of one of the poppy farms.

But the FIR could become the key issue in the case which has inevitably adopted political overtones. Singh and his supporters claim that the raids were politically motivated and that the entire affair is a carefully engineered conspiracy to damage Singh's political career. Bholadutt Saklani, former MLA from Dehra Dun adds that the possibility of Brahmadutt, the state's finance minister and Singh's long-standing rival, who he had defeated twice in Assembly elections, being involved cannot be ruled out.

Power Play: On a parallel track are accusations that the Gulab Singh case was inspired by some senior Congress(I) ministers involved in the on-going power play in Uttar Pradesh. Whatever the truth, it is difficult to fault their supporting evidence that the FIR was filed at Birnaud at 3 p.m. when Pathak himself clearly stated that the team reached the spot around 4 p.m.—an hour after the filing of the FIR. Further, neither Pathak's nor Deputy Commissioner Narcotics (Lucknow) R.K. Tiwari's names figured in the FIR's, in itself an unusual event.

Equally unusual is the fact that not a single statement by witnesses is recorded in the FIR, as would normally be the case. The plot took a bizarre turn when, a fortnight after the raids INDIA TODAY visited the poppy farms to find that the poppy plants had disappeared without a trace and in their place stood full-grown maize stalks, a crop that is not normally grown in this season.

However, Om Prakash Sharma, district magistrate, Dehra Dun, says that the district administration was aware that poppy has been cultivated on a 350-acre area in the district for the last 12 years and had taken no action till now. He also says that Gulab Singh would definitely have known about the poppy cultivation on his ancestral property. Sharma also admitted that a day prior to the raids he had received a telex message from the narcotics commissioner informing him about the impending raid and requesting local assistance. However, Sharma confessed that the team only concentrated on the area where Gulab Singh's "farm" was located.

Counter-charges: The investigating authorities counter this by saying that raids on one or two farms would have a salutary effect on the entire region. The investigating team also counters the evidence of the maize by saying that farm hands and Gulab Singh's relatives had burnt the poppy soon after the raids, reploughed the fields and transplanted maize. In fact, a second team sent 11 days after the raid to cross-check the claims found "nearly half-a-bucketful of crushed poppy heads as well as an uprooted plant incised poppy head". They also say have photographic evidence to p case.

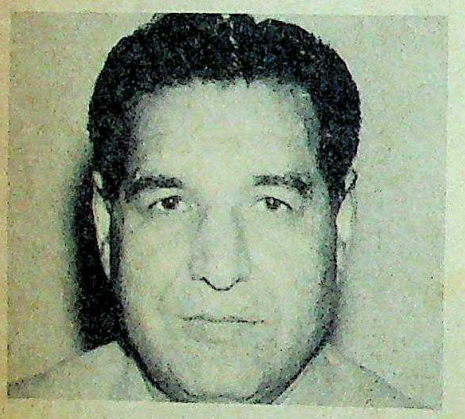
With all the conflicting evi display and allegations and allegations sprouting like poppy p Gulab Singh case promises to be a and controversial as the state's po the wake of the raids a number have appeared in the local press, motivated, regarding Singh's involv alleged land grabbing cases, which pending trial following a High Co order obtained by Singh fast Meanwhile, he has carried the into the enemy camp by launching allegations against the district tration officials involved raids—charges which Pathak term and motivated".

Low Profile: Singh, who sum before a magistrate's court in De after the FIR was filed and is current bail, has kept a low profile after th the headlines, and has not even be party meetings.

It is, however, clear that if the r politically motivated, the conspira succeeded partly in their objective political career—he is the District Committee(I) president—is in dan cially if the allegations regarding th case can be proved. That will not be judging by the many holes in the in ing team's evidence.

Singh's one consolation is tha tionally, a majority of criminal cases ing senior state political leaders, par those belonging to the ruling party convenient habit of fading out of exis being quietly brushed under the carp the initial publicity has died down could find himself in that category. would depend entirely on the cali clout of his political enemies.

—ANAND SAGAR





Gulab Singh and (right) poppy cultivators in the Birnaud area: bizarre plot

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STUDENTS

e Enemy Within

VS much-vaunted Islamic revo- appears to have finally spilled into India. Chanting *Allah-o-* and wielding primitive weapons sisting with nails, bicycle chains, iron rods, a group of 100 pro- Iranian students attacked 25 anti- counterparts under cover of dark- rth on June 9. The bloody battle em seriously injured and one of ram Mirani, dead.

of solidarity was evident among who were treated in Aligarh's Nehru Medical College Hospital. l's wards were full of knots of dents. More sat outside in the braving Aligarh's sweltering mid- t. All the students to remain anony- camera flash bulbs ery one of them hur- ered their faces. ion would be danger- their anonymous their families back ht be attacked. The meant that they had signed to the bra- hels'.

n: In a first infor- ort (FIR) filed with rh police, Behram e of the anti- students, alleged that s had recognised as attackers, yet all of not been arrested last But there was a dis- ception to the vio- s time: the attackers d, said the students, n Barkhordari, a se- tary in the Iranian n Delhi who is offi- the press attache. The proctor of Aligarh diversity (AMU) re- recognised Barkhor- completed his B.A. in from Aligarh last embassy car an hour attack.

t clear that the Ali- e had been caught off the attack. The majo- 's 300 Iranian stu- ng to the anti-govern- ion; and Vice-Chan- avid Hamid said he felt o-Khomeini students had received reinforcements from outside. According to observers here, the Union of Iranian Students' Islamic Associations, the national forum of pro-Khomeini students, is headquartered in Aligarh. The union had held a secret meeting, attended by representatives from all over the country, from June 1 to 5 in Aligarh. The day before the attack, the anti-Khomeini students complained to the Superintendent of Police, P.P.S. Sidhu, that they apprehended an attack. Sidhu reportedly ordered all Iranians from outside Aligarh to quit the town by noon on June 9. The order was ignored, but Sidhu assured the students that evening that the outsiders had left the campus. Shocked by the attack, Sidhu visited the injured students on June 12, bearing gifts of fruit and an apology for not having ensured their safety.

There was also a tense struggle throughout the night on June 10 over the body of Mirani. Mirani was a Kurd, a militant minority in northwestern Iran which has been engaged in a constant civil war with the Government. His parents in Kermanshah insisted that they wanted their son's body back. When Vice-Chancellor Hamid and District Magistrate Panna Lal Punia contacted the Iranian Embassy, they were told brusquely that the Government of Iran had nothing to do with Mirani, and that he was not a citizen of Iran.

It was true that Mirani has acquired refugee status in India, and was registered thus with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Delhi. The Aligarh authorities therefore contacted Fazul Karim, UNHCR's *chargé de mission*; but Karim, too was helpless: his logistics did not allow for refugees' bodies to be flown back to their countries of origin. The all-night tussle between Hamid, Punia and Sidhu and the students finally ended at 7 a.m. on June 11, when Mirani's body was buried with Shia rites in AMU's cemetery.



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

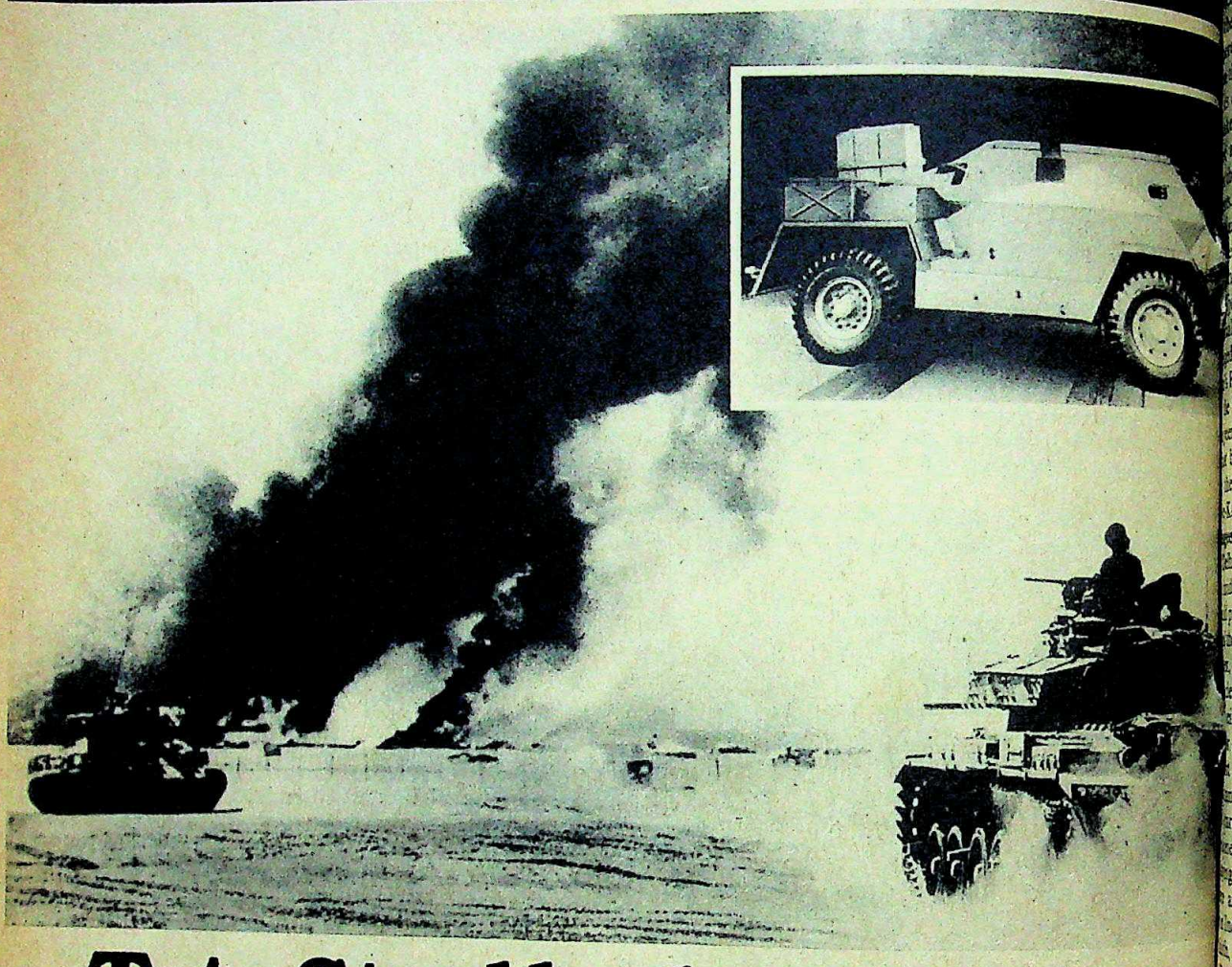
Injured Iranian students in Aligarh and (inset) Shahram Mirani: importing the revolution

Denial: Predictably, the Iranian Embassy issued a strong denial on June 12, saying that Barkhordari was nowhere near Aligarh when the attack occurred. The embassy's press note ended by saying that "all investigations are being carried out without this embassy being informed, and the body of the deceased student has been buried without our consultation". This was patently untrue, for both Hamid and District Magistrate Panna Lal Punia had told INDIA TODAY that the embassy had been quite uncooperative. Embassy officials, meanwhile, refused to meet the press.

The Government of India's ambiguous attitude towards dissident Iranian students in the country is not surprising. Many of the dissidents had participated enthusiastically in the revolution that toppled Shah Reza Pahlavi in February 1979; many of them had had their movements restricted by the Government of India in February 1978 when the Shah visited India. India's economic links with Iran have grown since

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...throughout the Iran-Iraq ...stance, Iran has continued to ...ports crude oil to India, and trade ...the two countries is expected to ...re is therefore a reluctance to take ...the cruelty of the Iranian regime ...pponents, even if such cruelty ...ugly forms in India.

...re more than 20,000 Iranians ...moment; the majority of them ... Most of them, under the All ...n Students' Associations, are ...nemies of the Islamic regime. ...s belong to various political ...or among these are the Moja...q, the Islamic guerrillas who ...in a bitter struggle with ...Pasdaran (revolutionary guards) ...Akkaliat (minority) faction of ...een-e-Khalq, a Marxist-Leninist ...believes in an Islamised Com... Peykar (struggle) party; and ...Kargar (workers' path).

...s: Officially, government off... refused to go on record on the ...ent. Unofficially, they said that ...prefer that the law took its own ...the guilty were punished. The fact ...that many of the dissident ...ents in India can never hope to ...r country. They are constantly ...new courses and thus staying ...210 of them have had their ...ncelled by the Iranian Embassy, ...rrently holders of UN High ...ner for Refugees (UNHCR) certi...g that they are refugees.

...are nearly 800 other Iranian ...India, all of them adherents of the ..., a minority that has suffered, ...ds, immense persecution at the ...Islamic rulers of Iran. There are ...Afghan refugees, and close to 100 ...se refugees, mostly from ...and Kampuchea.

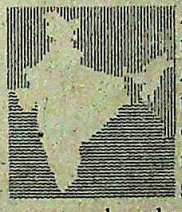
...e Government of India officially ...recognise the existence of any ...either does it exercise its pre... granting visas to dissident ...ose passports have expired. The ...gees, therefore, are technically ...dents in India. But the UNHCR's ...: "We are thankful that the ...ent here has granted *de facto* asy... ...se students." Apart from a mo... ...nd of Rs 500, each student refugee ...oney to buy books and medicine, ...HCR provides legal help.

...: By June 15, 28 Iranian students ... expelled by AMU's disciplinary ..., which consists of the deans of ... university's faculties and is ...ed by Pro Vice-Chancellor K.M. ... Karim's fear was that some of ...ay be anti-Khomeini students, and that they might be deported to Iran. "Deportation would be the bottom line," he said, "because they will most certainly go before firing squads the moment they return." But the Government was obviously aware of this danger, and there was no indication that any student would be deported. Reports also indicate that after Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati's recent visit, the Government of India has agreed to accept as many as 700 fresh students, who, allege anti-Khomeini students, are actually *hezbollahs* (Islamic hooligans).

Shahram Mirani's death has again underscored the tangled nature of Iranian politics. His friends fear that he may not be the last Iranian to die in this country. India could conceivably ban all political activity by Iranian students. If more blood is shed, however, the Government could find itself in a very sticky situation, torn between the compulsions of friendship with Iran and the humanitarian aspects of dissident Iranians being hunted out and attacked by their Islamic enemies. Until then, it has to contend with a sizeable population of Iranian students, most of whom can never hope to return home as long as Teheran is ruled by the Ayatollahs. —CHAITANYA KALBAG

GOA

Storm Warning



AS GOA gets ready for the monsoon session of the Assembly there are signs that a political storm is in the offing. Infighting in the ruling party has reached awesome proportions and was worsened when the Congress(I) High Command decided to shuffle about the local leadership, appointing Sulochana Katkar as the president of the Goa Pradesh Congress Committee(I) in place of Irene Barros.

If the past is any indication the latest changes are unlikely to do anything for the already tarnished image of the party. In the last two years Goans have become accustomed to the constant bickering amongst the 28-member ruling party. Nearly all the members are busy consolidating their own positions and pay scant attention to the concerns of the party. This was amply in evidence during the last budget session, when the Government just managed to scrape by despite the fact that it has an overwhelming 28 members in a 30-member house. On two occasions it had to withdraw official amending bills following opposition from its own members. Says one legislator ruefully: "We have 28 chief ministers."

Weak Leadership: Part of the trouble lies in the fact that Chief Minister Pratap Singh Rao Ji Rane has not been able to consolidate his position. Rane who has now been in office for two years was originally chosen as a compromise candidate. He has, however, not managed to build his own base and is still facing strong challenges from his powerful lieutenants, Industries Minister A.N. Naik and Health Minister Wilfrid D'Souza. Rane makes no bones about his difficulties saying: "I do not want to blame anyone, but we have been running the Government rather casually. The casual attitude has cost us a lot."

Rane's position is further weakened because the Congress(I) High Command seems to be waiting and watching the situation instead of taking active steps to prop him up. Several legislators stress that they are watching for signals from the High Command. Rane adds: "We are trying to have balanced development, outside help is a part of it, one cannot develop in isolation."

In a way, the infighting which is the bane of the party is nothing surprising. The Congress(I) in Goa has an unusual, if somewhat unsavoury history. Two years ago when the Congress(I) returned to power at the Centre 20 legislators led by Wilfrid D'Souza, who had been elected on the Congress(U) ticket, decided that they should conform to the national trend and defected en masse to the Congress(I). Says Froilano Machado, speaker of the Assembly: "It was a unique experience." Most legislators readily admit that the mid stream switch was purely a matter of convenience. Rane confesses candidly: "We would not have lasted three months had we not opted for the Congress(I)."

Little Progress: But Rane's inability to grab hold of the party machinery is telling on the Government's performance. Rane has been trying hard to push through development projects in Goa but he has not made any significant headway. Despite his best efforts only 8 per cent of the land is under irrigation and the fishing industry remains stagnant, content to utilise the 5 km traditional zone. Says a legislator: "Improvement will not be possible unless Rane establishes himself." Rane claims however that his government has come a long way. He points to the fact that Goa has the highest per capita income in



Rane: heavy price

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(Rs 2,400) and that 56 per cent literate.

influence has, however, created problems which the Government is a from solving. There has been an cheap labour from Karnataka, desh and Bihar. The newcomers do with the local population and have massive unauthorised colony of 1 lakh people in Vasco. Rane do not want Goa to go the turning into a shanty town." is any indication the trouble has

with this influx from other states also been an exodus of the local to the Gulf. This exodus has its as more than Rs 50 crore are remitted back from the Gulf In 1960 there were two banks in the there are around 200.

Government can, however, take for this. At the moment Rane concentrating his efforts on pre- natural beauty of the state. The is planning to set up an ecologi- ment council. Top priority is also to ecological development as an t of the western ghats develop- rise by the Centre. The state has also submitted a report chiefly with mining on ecologically Besides this the Government is to see that the TV tower is ready the Asian Games start.

these are only fringe problems Congress(I) sets its own house will not be able to get down to basic problems of the state.

—ASOKA RAINA in Panaji

cious rcle

THE SUDDEN spate of violent incidents in Assam last month—with 200 repor- ted bomb blasts in a fort- night—has once again underscored the grim deter- mination of the agitators not diktat from the Centre lying leaders of the Assam movement are, perturbed by the near certainty of elections before President's rule March next year. What turn the will take largely hinges on the of the talks that are likely to take between the Centre and the agitators month.

law of the land is not changed then



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Police patrol in Gauhati streets: keeping an uneasy peace

the strife-torn state will have to go to the polls within the next nine months on the basis of electoral rolls which are clearly not acceptable to the agitation leaders who have their sympathisers within at least two established political parties, the Congress(I) and the Janata Party. What makes the uncertainty about the polls even more compelling is the attitude of the administration. Senior government officials merely repeat the law which says President's rule cannot be extended beyond its one-year term.

Numbers Game: On the negotiations front, it is a continuation of the same numbers game in which the three-year-old speculation on how many foreigners there actually are in Assam has now centred round the question: whether it will be possible to hold elections throughout the state and, if not, then in how many of the constituencies. Relevant departments at the Dispur secretariat feel that it should not be difficult to hold elections in at least 70 constituencies. But the same people are totally unsure about what will happen in the rest of the state and also about the wisdom of having an elected assembly in which a formidable chunk of people will remain unrepresented. With the state still without a chief electoral officer and government employees yet to budge from their earlier stand that they will not be available for electoral processes unless the foreigners' issue is settled first, it is also doubtful whether it will be logistically possible to hold elections. The reluctance of the administration is apparent from the current speculation on the possibility of getting people from outside to man the 12,000 booths for which 60,000 officials will be required.

Given this background, Marxist leader Nandeshwar Talukdar told INDIA TODAY in Gauhati: "We fear that Indira Gandhi will change the law or declare partial emergency or do something which will enable President's rule to continue." And what President's rule means for Assam becomes clearer from his following remarks: "As it is, there seems to be an undeclared emergency in Assam. Very often we are denied permission to hold meetings and rallies and the atmosphere is hardly conducive to the pursuit of normal political activities." Going a step further from Talukdar, says veteran Congress leader and former chief minister Sarat Sinha, now the accepted leader of the Left and Democratic alliance: "Any elections in Assam will be rigged so that we cannot come to power." Sinha and Talukdar echo the fears of the major opposition parties who feel that the Centre will see to it that normal political processes continue to be disrupted in the state.

Cross-fire: There is also the evergrowing premonition that any elections in the state will provide another occasion for further violence and intimidation with the ordinary man caught in a cross-fire between the law-enforcing agencies and the extremist elements who today have a fairly strong hold on the continuing agitation. If the last few months' agitation tactics like the ten-hour black-out or bundh did not evoke an enthusiastic response, it was primarily because of the police who forced people to keep their lights on and compelled shopkeepers to keep their establishments open. In Fancy Bazaar, cops were even seen manning the shop counters. Left to them, the people would have rather obeyed the agitation leaders. And even if they had done so out of fear of the neighbourhood goons, the fact remains that in Gauhati and in other places, the boys still wield considerable clout and may very

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people to stay away from the booths
polls are held. The movement leaders
have stated in no uncertain terms
intention to take to the streets if polls
are held without any revision of the rolls.
Ananda Borbora, an agitation
"In such an event we will come
direct confrontation with the
ment. Maybe we will be shot at and
of us will die, but there can be no
doubt on the cause we are fighting
These words did not sound entirely
in view of the fact that the present
against foreigners has surely taken
for the worse. As *The Statesman*
"Gauhati has found its place on
first map of the north-east."
Furthermore, little comfort can be had
observations of government high-ups
like Secretary S.K. Agnihotri, 40, and
Army General Gill that they cannot rule
peace if polls are announced giving no
as what they propose to do to ensure
Such observations only arouse sus-
about they have no idea about the real
a huge intelligence gap keeps them
knowing what the other side is up to.

—SUMANTA SEN in Gauhati

AST

risis Identity

THE ENDLESS quest of the north-eastern states for the establishment of separate identity may enter a new phase August when regional parties meet Kohima in Nagaland to discuss ways for a common approach to get New Delhi to agree to some autonomy for the region. However, it is too early for any forecast on what the joint approach will take.

One of the most enthusiastic organisers of the Kohima meet is the small but militant Nikhil Loka Parishad (PLP) of Assam, a constituent of the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP). Way ahead of others in stridency the PLP has circulated among like-minded parties in other parts of the region which calls for a fight against Indian colonialism which seeks to destroy at the very root of the separate identity and heritage of the north-east".

The sense of alienation among PLP leaders like Nibaran Bora and Ananda Bora is evident from the constant use of terms like "Indian Government" and "Indian Press" thus making clear their avowed separate identity. The PLP feels the need of the hour is to have a single party and according to Borbora, a physics teacher at Gauhati University, who has faced imprisonment on several occasions including on a charge of having links with the outlawed People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA), the response so far has been very encouraging. In an obvious bid to extend its scope of functioning beyond the hills and foothills of the north-east, the PLP note also mentions the need to shoulder the responsibility of members of common ethnic stock living in the northern districts of West Bengal.

Bureaucratic Lag: If the calls of the PLP have fallen on receptive ears it is mostly because of the bureaucratic attitude of New Delhi. Mizoram Chief Minister Brigadier T.



Keishing (left) and Sailo: isolated

Sailo, for instance, is an extremely unhappy man, angry with New Delhi for dilly-dallying on the issue of granting statehood to the Union Territory after senior officials in the capital had agreed that this should be done. Sailo is also sore that New Delhi chose to conduct negotiations with Laldenga.

New Delhi's attitude towards Sailo had been partly governed by the assumption that his influence does not extend much beyond Aizawl. The Centre's short-sightedness was evident from the way the chief minister's People's Conference won all by-elections in May to the state Assembly routing the Congress(I). Right now the need to placate Sailo has assumed far greater importance with reports that the outlawed Mizo National Front (MNF) and its student wing Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) are again active.

Last fortnight's killings in Mizoram, which point to a renewed spell of terrorism by the MNF, are being attributed by official spokesmen at Aizawl to the prolonged but fruitless talks which the Centre had with Laldenga. During this period, MNF volunteers enjoyed amnesty and they used it to gear up their organisation. For one month now, the MNF has been telling non-Mizos to leave Mizoram—excluding the Assamese from the category, however, which again indicates the growing feeling among forces in the north-east that they should stick together. Senior police officers in Aizawl suspect that the editor and teacher who were murdered last fortnight were done away with as both were prominent non-Mizos.

New Problem: The fresh bases of influence that the MNF has been able to create, putting the amnesty period to good use, have added to the administration's problems. Countering these would mean another large-scale combing operation by the army; this, unfortunately, tends to further antagonise people and becomes counter-productive. The alternative is to fight the rebels politically and the administration started doing this last fortnight with radio appeals from Sailo and Lt Governor Kohli asking people not be carried away by propaganda.

With senior army officers admitting privately that there cannot be any military solution to the problem of insurrection in the north-east, the need obviously is to politically isolate the rebels from the masses—a task which cannot be achieved if people like Sailo in Mizoram and Reishang Keishing in Manipur feel left out. In the small and closely knit societies of Mizoram and Manipur the connections between rebels and politicians are much stronger than is commonly known.

Alienation: Even a Congress(I) leader like Chief Minister Keishing is openly critical of what he feels is continued remote control from New Delhi (INDIA TODAY, March 31), a sentiment which is not far removed from PLP terms like "Indian colonialism". While neither Keishing nor the local Congress(I) stalwarts will be officially present at Kohima it would be naive to assume that they do not share the conference organisers' enthusiasm for protecting the separate identity of the north-east.

Right now the process of coming closer in the north-east is taking place at two levels. While the Kohima conference will see the legitimate parties trying to achieve greater coordination, a similar target is being sought to be reached by the underground National Socialist Council of Nagaland, the PLA and the MNF. For the last one month there have been a series of meetings in adjoining Burma and even before that a greater degree of understanding was noticed between the Thankgkul Nagas and the Vaishnavite Meiteis who dominate the PLA and the MNF. Without this understanding with the Vaishnavite Meiteis, the Ukhrul ambush in February in which 21 army personnel were killed would not have been possible.

As with guerrilla movement everywhere it is extremely difficult here to tell the difference between the insurrectionists and the average people. In the backstreets of Imphal, Kohima and Aizawl the distinctions get blurred and further complicate the task of the patrolling army and the Central Reserve Police. And the conference in Kohima, which hopes to bring the various elements closer together, is likely to make their task more difficult.

—SUMANTA SEN

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PRADESH

...eathing Space

THE ELECTION of the ... Congress(I)-sponsored inde... pendent candidate, Thakur ... Sen Negi to the speakership ... of the Himachal Assembly ... last month was the first taste ... of victory for the fledgling ... by Chief Minister Ram Lal. ... beleaguered Congress(I) min... breathe easier, the 38 and 29 votes ...vour of Negi and the Bharatiya ...arty (BJP) candidate, Sarvan ...ave once again underscored the ...e Opposition to put up a good ...a total strength of 33 in a House ...ith feelers from some disgruntled ...l MLA's of their willingness to ...er, the Opposition could have po... party some anxious moments.

...pposition: Despite the recent tri... ever, Ram Lal's headaches are ...ing over. The chief minister can ...t forward to stiff opposition ...gs in the race for the deputy ... But the primary weakness of ...al Ministry is no doubt the very ... of its MLAs which consist of ...ho are willing to change party ...the drop of a hat.

...e the party rests on such shaky ..., the chief minister is reported to ...ously dangling carrots at oppo... members of the House. For instance, ...l MLA Mankhotia was planning ...the Congress(I) central leaders last ...e sort out his case. "There have ...n from some leaders but I have not ...," he told INDIA TODAY. The ...y also appears to be using its baits ...mbers, although Ram Lal denied ...de any such efforts. "My High ...d has not cleared me to admit BJP ..." says he.

...Fully aware of the ruling party's ...e BJP High Command has been ...constant vigil on its prized flocks. ...a disciplined cadre-based party. ...nd allurements do not normally ...we have to take care as there could ...links in the chain," says Thakur ...ugh, the party's state president. ...troubles of Ram Lal do not end ...e new ministry appears to be too ...one man to handle successfully. ...already talk of power centres within ...ress(I) hierarchy. One such per... to reckon with is Sukh Ram, his ...who controls over 50 per cent of the ...development budget. Sukh Ram ...ings as leverage to his advantage.




Negi (left) and Ram Lal: first triumph

"I have the capacity to provide leadership if the party chooses me," says he.

The slender margin of victory achieved by the Congress(I) in the recent Assembly elections, and the quicksilver temperaments of the independent MLAs are sure guarantees of instability in this northern state bordering China. How long Ram Lal can hold fort is anybody's guess.

—GOBIND THUKRAL in Simla

TAMIL NADU

Crowning Glory



EVER SINCE his arrival at the helm of Tamil Nadu affairs five years ago, film star Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) has, quite forgivably, injected a powerful dose of film-type histrionics into the state's colourful politics. But last fortnight's extravaganza produced and directed by him far surpassed anything that had gone before. The event, however, was entirely in keeping with his larger-than-life image; the debut of the new crown princess of Tamil Nadu politics, Jayalalitha, 32, the dusky dancer-actress who is a close friend of MGR's and has co-starred with him in quite a few films. With MGR, as he is familiarly known, running the state like it was his personal film production company, the crowning of a queen to co-star with him on the political stage was an inevitable occurrence.

Her original debut on June 6 as an ordinary member of the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) was a low-key affair but her official debut last fortnight in the picturesque coastal town of Cuddalore was more extravagant than the launching of a new star. It was, in fact, more akin to Cleopatra gliding down the Nile in triumph with MGR playing the part of Julius Caesar.

Saga: Resplendent at the head of a serpentine procession, Jayalalitha was ensconced in a "Peacock Throne" complete with ladies-in-waiting and ministers and top party brass in her train. MGR, as befitting a Caesar, watched the procession benevolently from a 20-foot-high platform while Jayalalitha waved languidly at the gaping crowds. Cecil D'Mille would have been overshadowed were he around.

Like all MGR productions, the launching of Jayalalitha was structured around a torrid saga of the love-hate relationship between the two stars. Industry gossip has linked them together in an on-again-off-again relationship that has finally like all MGR movies, ended happily. With her political debut last fortnight, the rumour mills were grinding once again with whispers that she was being groomed for a ministerial berth in the state Cabinet, though she herself denied any such moves. "Such appointments are not like giving chocolate or candy to a girl," she told INDIA TODAY. But that would entirely depend on how much she likes the taste.

Jayalalitha (standing) and ministers in the procession: histrionic debut

KATHIR



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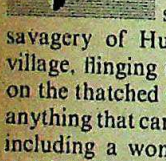


RAJ CHENGAPPA

A burnt-out Harijan house in A... gruesome massacre

TAMIL NADU

Conversion Backlash



THEY were like medieval invaders. Two thousand men marched towards Ayyapuram, a tiny hamlet in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, with flaming torches, spears and scythes. With the savagery of Huns they stormed into the village, flinging their torches of destruction on the thatched houses and chopping down anything that came in their path. Five people including a woman were hacked to death and 21 injured as the bloody orgy continued till 50 houses were razed to the ground. The bloodthirsty mob in the full force of its fury, was at last dispersed by a 200-strong force of policemen.

With dense smoke billowing from smouldering houses, ravaged Ayyapuram became the flashpoint for the worst communal clashes in Tamil Nadu since the wave of Harijan conversions to Islam engulfed the state last year. The gruesome massacre brought home the extent of the reaction to the conversions of 1,000 Harijans in Meenakshipuram (25 km from Ayyapuram) in February last year that triggered off a series of such conversions elsewhere in the state.

Puliangudi, a sleepy village 5 km from Ayyapuram, became the focal point of last fortnight's clashes between Harijans and Hindus that spread like a prairie fire to all the surrounding villages, including Meenakshipuram. In the week-long battle between the two communities last month, nine people were killed and more than 500 houses burnt in the mindless violence. The Tamil Nadu Government rushed a 600-strong police force headed by an inspector-general to soothe feelings and restore calm in the troubled areas.

Communal Tension: Although the wave of violence has subsided, the threat of another outburst which could engulf the entire district—as one police officer fears—still hangs like a spectre over the ravaged villages. The charged atmosphere enveloping the affected villages and tight-lipped bureaucrats made the cause of the outbursts difficult to analyse. But ever since the Meenakshipuram conversions, tension has been building up in these villages. Harijans, who form an estimated 50 per cent of the population in the villages around Meenakshipuram, have finally gathered courage with the support of local Muslims. They are raising their voices against the suffocating discrimination that the caste Hindus have allegedly practised against them.

The first signs of their militancy showed itself early this year when on January 10 a nebulous organisation of Muslims and Harijans called Samuthuva Sahodarathva Sangham (SSS)—an association for equality and brotherhood—was formed by A. Shahul Hameed, the lone Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) member in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, who was elected from Kadayanallur taluk 10 km from Puliangudi, ironically supported by the oppo... which included the DMK and the C... Hameed is the convener of the T... based South India Islamic Society... responsible for the Meenakship... versions. The SSS was formed main... about greater amity between Ha... Muslims as a first step to the... conversion. Meanwhile the H... Puliangudi organised themselves... association called Thalthapatto... Urimai Sangham (Association ... Welfare of the Downtrodden) on M... which lent support to the SSS. Said E... the Sangham's young general s... "We had decided we would shed o... to gain equality with other cas... symbolise their militancy they desig... and green flag. While the red stood... blood the green was supposed ... equality but its similarity to the gre... IUML flag was too close to be a coi... The Sangham then started m... Harijans in other villages and on... organised a massive convention whi... sentatives of 90 surrounding villag... ded. The convention decided that a... sub-castes of Harijans would put up a... struggle for equality.

Collision Course: The unusua... by the Harijans brought together ... Hindu caste groups, mainly the T... Marawas, Nadars, Konars, P... Moopanars who were basically dri... more significantly, it is supposed ... brought the Rashtriya Swyamsewa... (RSS) on the scene; they have esta... base at Tenkasi, 30 km from Puliang... clashes between Hindus and Chr... March last in Madakadu village... bouring Kanyakumari district had ... litated the RSS's establishment in ... version zone".

While the loosely knit joint ac... of caste Hindus claimed that their ... with the Harijans were cordial, the ... the Muslims of driving a wedge ... them. Said M. Sankarapandian ... former MP and town Congress(I) ... "The alarming activities of the SSS ... transforming Puliangudi into ano... nakshipuram, forced us to come ... despite political differences."

Things worsened when Harij... down all flags on their streets and ... their green and red banner. The ... retaliated by putting up yellow flag... 'Om' symbol on top of their houses. ... June 8 two unfortunate coincidence... ked off the riots: a meeting was org... the SSS at Kadayanallur which w... addressed by the president of ...

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Sait at 10 p.m. On the same day the Ratham, a mobile unit for the propa of the Hindu religion designed by wa Hindu Parishad was to arrive. e unit was equipped with sophisticadio-visual equipment such as a ve slide projector, a 16 mm film and pre-recorded cassettes of desongs and discourses.

contradictory versions are given by munities as to what caused the riots. Hindus maintain that the Ratham nted from going through the st- Harijans who on the next day one of its supporting pillars. The claim that while they were attend- ss meeting they were stoned by the community in a village called natti. The Marawas on their part it was the inflammatory speech of Sait at the sss meeting that sparked olence. Asked about the real cause ts District Collector Nirmal Singh id: "I don't know. We are ing."

ence: But over the next week became the main targets for attack. rst tear gas shells the next day to a mob of Harijans which had garound the town's police station. arijan policeman travelling in a bus ed seriously. The same day a textile nging to a Marawa was looted. On a mob of Harijans was said to have e town police station and police fire killing two of them. Even as s being restored, 200 houses belongrth Muslims and Hindus were set on h communities blame each other for the incident while district officials do not say which group was the real culprit.

Hira promulgated Section 144, Cr. PC, banning the gathering of more than five persons and the carrying of dangerous weapons. But the next day the Ayyapuram massacre took place and the officials are unable to explain how 2,000 people were allowed to gather in daylight and storm the village—particularly Ayyapuram, a Harijan village.

IN THE next three days violence spread to Velaigoundenpatti where 18 Harijan houses were burnt; then to Muthuswamypuram where 30 houses were razed to the ground; and finally to Rajapalayam. The wave of violence moved southwards to Vasudevanallur and threatened to engulf the taluks of Tenkasi, Sivagiri and Shenkottah. When on June 13 a mosque was burnt in Meenakshipuram it looked as if the riots would explode into a communal carnage. But intensive police patrolling with a flag march being taken out every day in most of the villages and a series of peace meetings finally brought an uneasy calm. Shopkeepers who had shut down their establishments for a week cautiously opened them. The streets which had worn a deserted look slowly filled up as the villages limped back to normalcy.

Deterioration: But the bitterness lingers on, and both sides are unrelenting. The Harijans who bore the brunt of the riots are angry and sullen. Samuel warned: "If the Government does not look after our welfare we will convert our faith and embrace Islam." Meanwhile the Hindus and Muslims continue to blame one another for the events. Shahul Hameed of sss blames the RSS for instigating the violence, and in turn the Hindus accuse "Muslim fanatics" for sparking off the riots.

However belated the reaction to these communal incidents, the state Government has stepped up its pressure on the warring elements by threatening to invoke the National Security Act to detain suspects. The Secretary of the Communist Party of India Govindan Nair told newsmen in Madras last month that the conversions of Harijans had proved 'counter-productive' because of 'Hindu backlash'. The state Congress Committee(I) President M.P. Subramaniam has demanded a judicial inquiry into the incidents and called for a meeting of the heads of all religious and political parties to find a solution. But with neither side willing to forget if not forgive, the situation may soon develop into what S.K.T. Ramachandran, a former general secretary of the state Congress(I) describes as "a war between extremists".

—RAJ CHENGAPPA in Puliangudi

Collector Hira talking to villagers



RAJ CHENGAPPA

WEST BENGAL

Getting Out Of Hand



TRUE to expectations the newly elected Congress(I) legislators of West Bengal gave the state Assembly a taste last fortnight of the backstreet vandalism that seems to have permeated every section of the party. When Governor B.D. Pandey rose to deliver the inaugural address they barracked him, then lay down on the floor to prevent him from leaving and even tore off the National Flag from the bonnet of his limousine. Pandey finally had to escape in another car which was brought to a side entrance.

But if the legislators thought that their performance would please the high command they were in for a rude shock. They were hauled over the coals by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself who summoned their leader Abdus Sattar, to Delhi for a dressing down. In the wake of the rebuke came reports that Mrs Gandhi was again considering a thorough overhaul of the state leadership after the poor showing at the hustings.

Fall-out: However, if the party's election performance invites the axe then the local party bosses may not be the only victims. Other luminaries such as Union Energy Minister Abdul Barkat Ali Ghani Khan Choudhury who was in sole charge of the election machinery in the state may also be in for the chop. Ever since the elections Choudhury's detractors in the state unit of the party have been claiming that he is in trouble as nearly all the losing candidates were his handpicked men. On top of that is the fact that the party also fared badly in Choudhury's own district, Malda, which he has always claimed as his pocket borough.

Choudhury, on the other hand, has been telling his supporters that his relationship with the power centre at 1, Safdarjang Road is better than ever. Indeed, his supporters have also been spreading the rumour that "Madam has asked Barkatda to agree to be the party's nominee for the presidential elections". Choudhury, true to style, did not explicitly deny the stories, but is reported to have told confidants non-commitally: "Well I cannot say, I have not been sounded for the office."

Meanwhile as one of the men supposed to oversee party affairs in West Bengal, Choudhury has not been spared the wrath of

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the prime minister for the unruly scenes inside the legislature about which she got a full report from the Governor. Indeed as events unfolded last fortnight they clearly revealed that if Mrs Gandhi is an enigma to outsiders, she is no less an enigma to her own partymen. Congressmen in the state were completely taken aback when she suddenly summoned Jyoti Basu to Delhi and had an hour-long meeting with him during which, as the chief minister told the press, "several issues of importance like Sheikh Abdullah's latest moves in Kashmir and Assam were discussed."

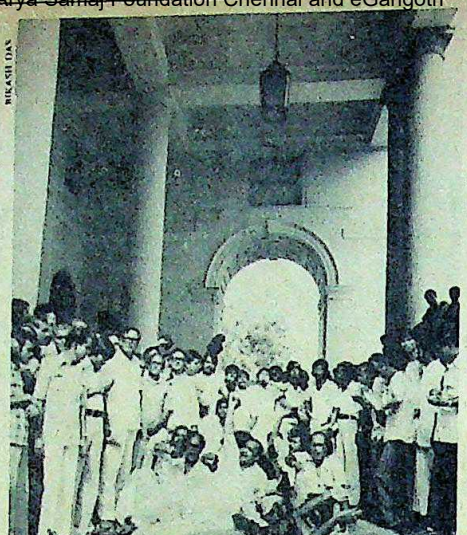


Sattar: rebuked

Feelers: Basu, however, omitted to mention that the meeting was another of those feelers which the prime minister has been sending to the Marxists for support on several issues, even if other opposition forces do not agree to do so. In return she is said to have promised the Marxists smooth sailing in West Bengal. Whatever the outcome of such feelers may be, right now they are an embarrassment to Congressmen in West Bengal who have been threatening to bring down the Centre's wrath on the Marxists. As an irate Congress(I) leader says: "Instead of leading us up the garden path like this, the prime minister should tell us clearly whether we ought to be hostile to Jyoti Basu or not."

While Congressmen are grumbling about the lack of clear directions from the top, they have made little effort to patch up internal differences despite repeated urgings from Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv. Last fortnight Gopal Das Nag, one of the party secretaries, sent a long list of complaints to the High Command about how he lost the elections because of the indifference of a section of the party leadership. Nag contested from the Kulti seat, one of the Assembly constituencies making up the Asansol parliamentary constituency, which returned party President Ananda Gopal Mukherjee in the 1980 elections. Nag claimed that he had not been given the support he was promised and added that it was on the basis of this assurance that he gave up Serampore which the Congress(I) won back from the Marxists.

Organisational Lapses: Nag's complaint is only one of the series of private admissions that the party could have improved its performance at the polls but for organisational lapses and infighting to cover which they have been trying to raise the smokescreen of rigging. The rigging charge, however, has not found many supporters, nor is it likely to, for the simple reason that the prime minister has not commented on these charges. She has on the other hand openly rebuked her partymen.



Blockade by Congress(I) legislators: backstreet tactics

Left wholly to themselves and not knowing which way to turn, the West Bengal Congress(I) leaders are engaged in the only game they have mastered over the years—that of buck passing—even though they know how dangerous and futile it can be.

—SUMANTA SEN

BIHAR

Unending Agitation



IN AN all-time high, last fortnight, the strike by over 16,000 university and college teachers crossed the two-month mark. Appearing all set to continue indefinitely, it saw over 1,600 teachers court arrest and be released unconditionally, and seven universities with 280 colleges involving five lakh students close prematurely for summer recess only to reopen gradually and remain deserted.

Much to the chagrin of publicity-conscious Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra, this made mockery of his two-year-old pledge. Assuming stewardship of the agitation-torn state of Bihar, the teacher-turned-politician had vowed to cleanse the examination system, improve the lot of and purify education as a whole. centred, quite clearly, on a 31-point of demands jointly drafted organisations—the Federation of (Service) Teachers' Associations (FUSTAB) and the Federation of Teachers' Associations of (FUTAB)—which the Government

According to a spokesman of action committee of the two fe most of the demands had alre agreed upon by the Government as as 1972 but were never implem Professor Amar Nath Singh, gene retary of the Patna University T Association (PUTA), added that the mands could be broadly divided in categories: improvement in servi ditions with financial implications (mands); improvement in the organi structure of universities (19 demand correction of anomalies among vari tions of teachers (eight demands) teacher leaders, Syed Mutaba Huss Prabhakar Jha, commented that the category of demands hurt Mishra m

Autonomy Violated: Teachers that in the name of academic autono Government was managing affairs th ordinances which had stripped the u sities of their administrative and fi autonomy. The universities have no to appoint any teacher, they added.

Other demands over which turned restive were financial ones. pointed out that pay revisions were 1978. What they were demanding mediate wage revisions in the ligh Kothari Commission's recomme and interim relief to the tune of 30 pe their basic salary. Besides the Gov had not paid their impounded allowances into their provident fund last three and a half years and had them all other facilities at par with ment staff. After the fourth pay re the government staff early this ye remains a gap of Rs 800 between chers' and class two officials' salar used to be equal since 1940. Even a ment clerk gets more than the lamented a federation's spokesman.

On the other hand, the Gov claimed that it had done a lot teachers. It had converted over 200 colleges into constituent ones, crea promotional avenues and launched welfare schemes. Indeed Mishra once claimed that the teachers of Bih better than those in Oxford. Descri current agitation as politically m rather than welfare oriented, official said that acceptance of demands wo an annual financial burden of Rs

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Government was incapable of meeting of its tight monetary situation.

Attitude: FUSTAB chief, Prasad Sinha, emphasised that the go on strike from April 12 did not a threat. It was an expression of ers' frustration at the indifferent of the Government.

Government on the other hand ed seriously active. A week before began, Education Minister Karam Bagat invited the teachers' leaders ations. But he himself never turned d-May, the Government set up an mmittee headed by the then chief P.P. Nayyar to go into the

e end of May the chief secretary d that the Government had re- d the demands. Using the last wea- s arsenal, the Government also that all temporary teachers refusing duties would be sacked and discip- ion would follow against confirmed ultaneously came the announce- t the Government had accepted nds, most of which were not in the

ng Strain: The unending agitation er started telling upon the nerves e Government and the federations. ations fear that the teachers who



KRISHNA MURARI KISHAN

Bihar's striking teachers: heading for a showdown

had been paid their salary for only two months might not sustain it for another month while the students have threatened to start agitating if the strike is not called off. According to Students Federation of India (SFI) leader Sarvodaya Sharma, a state-level student-teacher coordination committee has already been set up in this connection.

Hundreds of students have not been able to secure admission outside the state because in some universities intermediate examinations could not be held while in others the results are held up. Besides, the academic session is three years behind schedule in Patna University and one year behind schedule in Ranchi and Magadh Universities. However Patna University Vice-Chancellor Sudershan Prasad Singh claimed that despite the strike all results were published in time. The teachers describe it as yet another fraud with the examinations being conducted with the help of government clerks and the police allowing a free hand to students to indulge in unfair means.

Corruption has already reduced the degrees of the universities of Bihar into a farce elsewhere. With almost the entire Opposition threatening to immobilise the Assembly which begins its monsoon session on June 25 if the Government fails to accept the strikers' demands the crisis is heading for an explosive climax. —FARZAND AHMED

ALA

mbo Gas

THE FAMOUS Sri Krishna temple at Guruvayoor, Kerala, had a problem. The temple owns 38 ele- nts and the authorities had their ds full-figuratively speaking, of ure—clearing away the masses of ng that the animals produced. That when the Khadi and Village ustries Commission (KVIC) stepped the act with a community bio-gas fed with elephant dung, first of its kind, which ently went on stream at emple. The plant is located rby and will provide king gas to its staff and r family.

The gas plant has a digester dequate size to ferment the ant dung. The gas holder ering this digester collects ch diverts the gas produced ough fermentation into the pipe at the correct pressure. gas pipe conveys the gas the gas holder to the po- of use without undue loss ressure. The remnants left in the plant is a slurry very rich in nitrogen and humus which can be used as manure. The gas obtained from the plant will burn with a non-luminous blue flame without a trace of smell or smoke and do the cooking in almost half the time taken by coal or petroleum gas. It can also be used as fuel for lighting. At present the plant has a capacity to produce 60 cubic metres of cooking gas which will meet the requirements of 30 families attached to the temple.

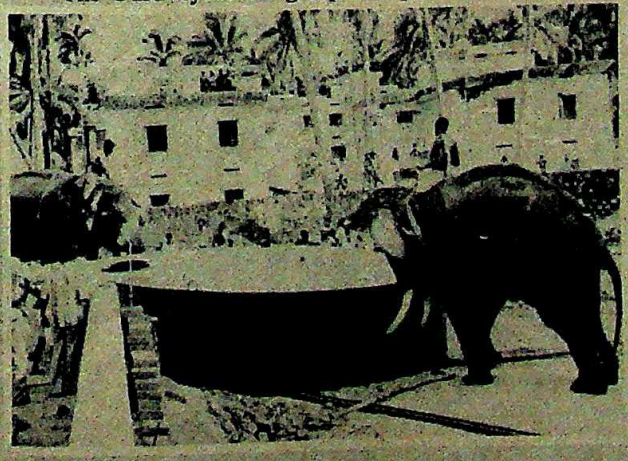
Cost: The total estimated cost of the plant is about Rs 2 lakh. T. Govindan Nair, director of KVIC, Kerala Circle, said the Guruvayoor bio-gas plant is a part of the programme for alternative sources of energy envisaged by the Government of India. He also feels that community bio-gas plants can be set up in towns with big vegetable markets where the rotten vegetable waste can be fed into a bio-gas plant and thus provide an alternative source of energy.

Meanwhile, the Guruvayoor Devaswom the supreme body of the temple, is happy that they have found a way out for the disposal of elephant dung. The dung could not be used as manure because of its fibrous content and during the monsoon season the accumulation of the dung gave rise to many infections among the elephants. P. Sankaran Kutty Nair, administrator, Guruvayoor Devaswom, claims the gas plant is a blessing from Lord Krishna.

Whether that is true or not, the second largest temple in south India—it has an annual turnover of Rs 4 crore—appears to have solved one, rather elephantine problem.

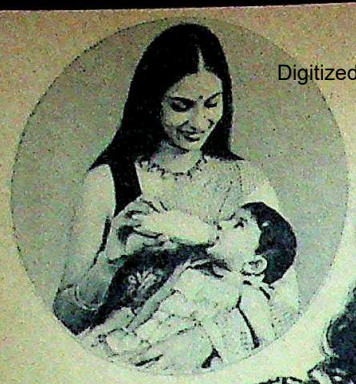
—SREEDHAR PILLAI in Guruvayoor

The Guruvayoor bio-gas plant: perfect solution



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WHEN SHE GROWS UP SHE WILL IMITATE YOU



...and feed her child with a poop-cee feeder

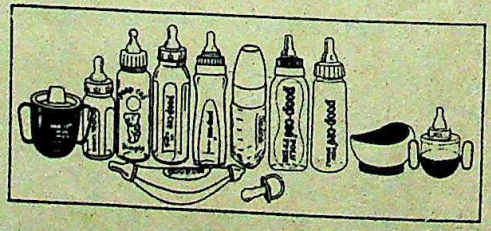
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...o Takes Revenge

KARNATAKA's quarrelsome couple, Chief Minister Ramarao Gundu Rao and Pradesh Congress Committee(I)'s (KPCC-I) president Khubasingh Teju Rathod were finally divorced ...ght when the Congress High ...unceremoniously sacked the state ...er after he had held the post for a ...three months. Rathod's replace... ironically enough 54-year-old ...Mallanna, a Lok Sabha member, ...chairman of a parliamentary com... ...ving the proposed amendments in ...ge laws of the country.

...High Command's sudden but ex...moval of the KPCC(I) president ...the Rao-Rathod feud had become ...ible. Rathod burnt his boats last ... when he not only carried out a ...ack against what he termed the ...Rao cult" but defiantly appointed ...al secretaries, revamped three dis...gress committees and appointed ...o 15 party cells without consulting ...chief minister or getting clearance ...elhi bosses. Rathod played truant ...outmanoeuvred him by getting all ...ndidates for the recent legislative ...ctions approved by the Congress ...ary Board.

...ing with confidence after his un... coup of the council seats and ...with anger over Rathod's tirade, ...r blocked all party funds to the ...and even had his personal phone ...ected. He then flew to Delhi and ...Mrs Indira Gandhi to remove ...a decision that had been kept in ...for several months now.

...rtant Post: Rathod was visiting the ...ged Udipi in Dakshina Kannada ...hen he received the news of his ... But the removal was a mixed ...r Rao since he failed to foist his ...haram Singh, the state's housing ...as KPCC(I) president.

...Mallanna's appointment cannot ...rued as a victory for either side as his ...e came in the wake of the High ...'s indecision over who should ...handle the vital post. As he was vice-...of the KPCC(I) his taking charge has ...egarded as a bureaucratic formality of ...the keys till the Congress high-ups ...who should open the door. A former ...Mallanna joined the Congress in ...has been a member of Parliament ...971. Initially he was a strong supporter of the so-called MP's lobby which wanted the dissolution of the state Assembly after the Devraj Urs ministry fell in 1980 and he vehemently opposed Rao's continuance as chief minister. But when he realised that Rao was to stay and that Jaffer Sharieff, Union minister of state for railways, whom he supported, was not reliable, Mallanna changed his stand and made friends with the chief minister. Said Mallanna: "Rao and I had a misunderstanding but that's over. Now we are good friends and I am confident of rejuvenating the party's organisation."

Rathod's induction as president, in March last year, is now regarded as an avoidable folly by partymen. With Rao angling for his close friend R.Y. Ghorpade, MP, and Sharieff haggling for T.V. Krishnan, the AICC general secretary, for the KPCC(I) presidentship, Rathod was chosen as the compromise candidate. A political lightweight from Bijapur city, Rathod was a cabinet minister in the Urs government before he was trounced by 9,527 votes by S.H.S. Bakshi, the Janata candidate in the 1978 Assembly elections. Initially Rao thought Rathod would be a puppet, but soon found out he was self-opinionated and therefore a threat. The chief minister soon made an effort to sideline him. Said the maverick Rathod: "I am not sorry for what has happened. What Rao has done may be alright. It was an adjustment Madam (Mrs Gandhi) had to make." Rathod's plank of dissent was that Rao was overbearing and too communal for the party's well being.



Rathod (left) and Rao: final divorce

Seeing that Ghorpade has more enemies than friends, Rao is backing the 46-year-old Dharam Singh who hails from backward Gulbarga district. Ever since his induction as housing and urban development minister, Singh has become a close confidant of Rao. He played a key role in the Youth Congress(I) convention, held in Bangalore January last—a resounding success and an incident which has been a sore point for the dissidents because they claim that the unbridled extravagance had spoilt the image of the party in the state. But the dissidents' main grouse against Singh is that he is too much under Rao's thumb as a consequence of which they might be shunted off. While Sharieff and company have not yet found an alter ego to Rathod they have succeeded in blocking Singh's elevation. For the moment, sources close to Rao are unwilling to admit any setback and one of them said: "The delay was because we had not decided whether Singh was needed more in Rao's cabinet or as party president. This would be resolved soon."

Alienation: But Rao has to resolve another issue soon: the sacking of his protégé B.K. Hari Prasad as secretary of the Karnataka Youth Congress Committee(I) (KYCC-I) by its President K.J. George as the result of a quarrel. During the Youth Congress convention, George recently accused Prasad of indulging in goondaism after his supporters ransacked the party office and tried to assault committee members who were attending a meeting. Prasad's version is that George's supporters brandished a revolver at him after he had tried to pass a resolution stating that the KYCC(I) was opposed to Maneka Gandhi. Although George was initially close to Rao, he fell out with him when the chief minister appointed Prasad as chairman of the slum clearance board and ignored his pleas for a similar plum post. He further distanced himself by hobnobbing with M. Raghupathy, a rabid dissident and close associate of S. Bangarappa—Rao's *bete noire*. With matters coming to a boil the High Command may dissolve the present KYCC(I) executive and restore Rao's wounded prestige.

Meanwhile, the Opposition in the state is scurrying to see if they can make a mountain of the little dust that they have been able to gather from Rao's misdeeds. With the battle within the Congress(I) coming out in the open, Bangarappa, who has so far been quiet, has suddenly become vociferous against Rao's Government. He openly supported the language agitation and accused the Government of mishandling the recent police firing in Shimoga district in which three farmers were killed. Indications are that Bangarappa is likely to adopt the orphaned Urs's Kranti Ranga as his plank and using matinee idol Raj Kumar as leverage to catapult himself into prominence again.

A new factor in Karnataka's political scenario is Lok Dal leader George Fernandes who after being wiped out by Datta Samant in Bombay and tossed around in national politics is hovering over Bangalore in the hope of making a comeback in his home state.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA

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It ensures he has a flying start and a smooth passage in life.

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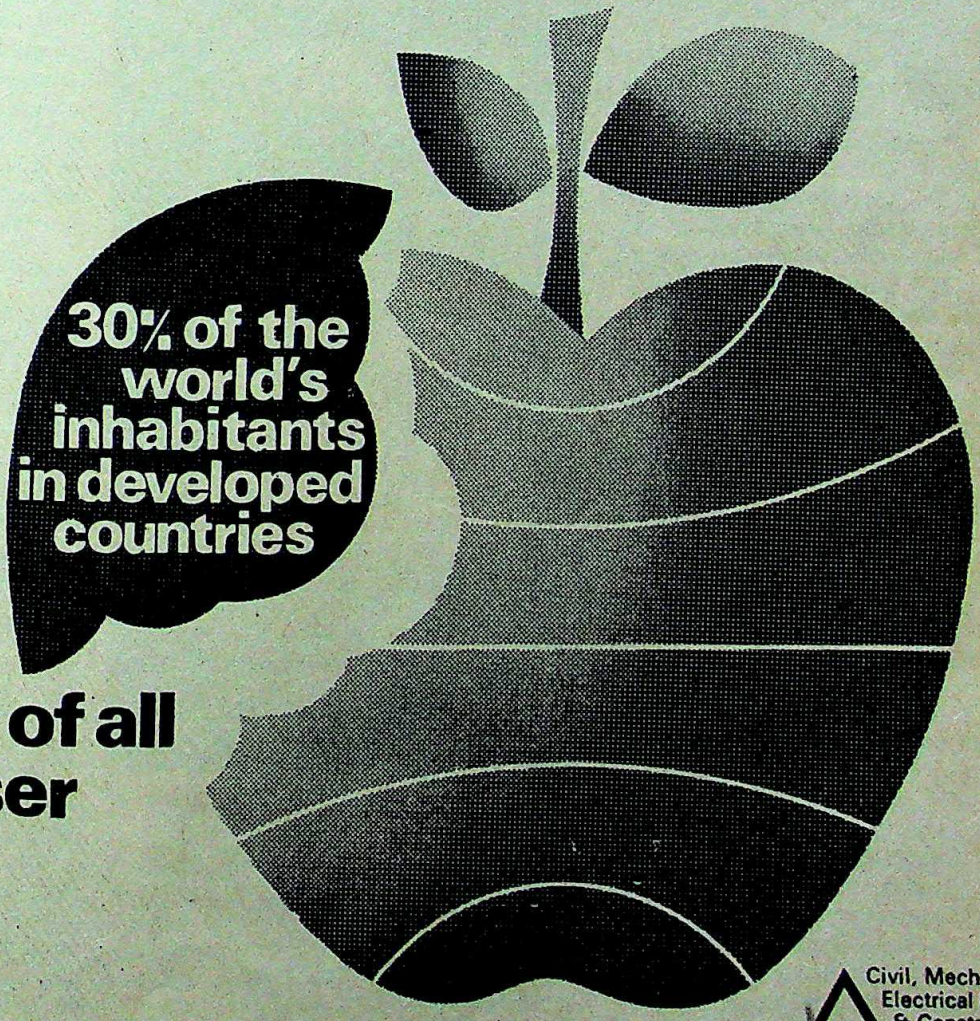
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TIHAR JAIL

Death In The Dungeons

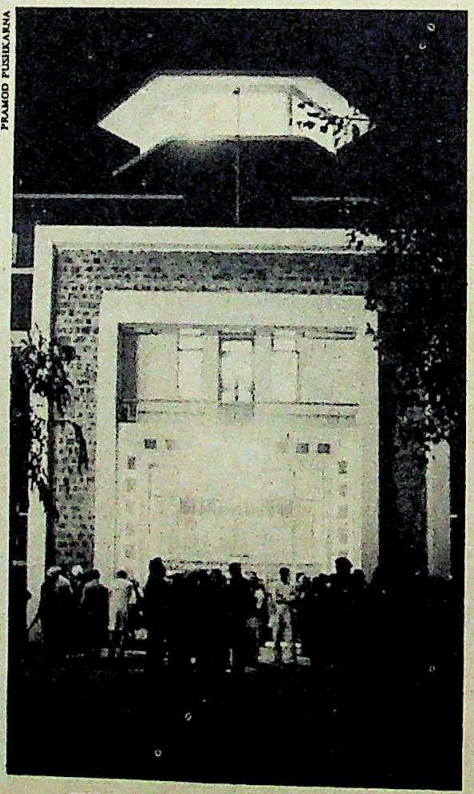
IN THE twilight world of prisons, the common tenets of human decency are often flung aside to moulder in a corner. Their place is taken by the primitive law of survival—of the fittest, of the boldest, of those with enduring links to the authorities who rule the prison with an iron hand, along with the mafia they nurture and encourage. Of late, Delhi's Tihar Jail has been high on the list of such corrupt reformatories, and has made it regularly to the front pages of newspapers for the murky activities flourishing within its forbidding walls. There is, however, no dearth of worms left to be uncovered. One is the bare, brutal fact that 21 prisoners—16 undertrials and five convicts—have died while in the jail's custody, and most of these deaths appear to have taken place in very suspicious circumstances.

The first step towards turning Tihar Jail's latest stone was taken by Harkrishan Singh Surjeet, Marxist member of the Rajya Sabha, at a meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to the Home Ministry when he asked the home minister to give him information on the "deaths of undertrial prisoners, prisoners in police lock-ups, jails between January 1, 1981 and March 31, 1982 along with state-wise break-up; inquest report case-wise". In what appears to be a case of discretion triumphing over valour, most states sent no detailed information. Others, like Delhi, gave some and held back some. The Delhi Administration, for instance, reported to the Home Ministry that in the time stipulated by Surjeet, 14 persons died in custody and in only six cases was the inquest report received.

Missing Facts: Investigations by INDIA TODAY, however, reveal that the Delhi Administration held back information relating to at least three deaths in judicial custody and did not supply all the facts about the other deaths. To begin with, the list sent to the Home Ministry contained 15 names—this was the list ultimately given to Parliament. But actually 18 deaths had taken place before March 31, 1982 and three more since then bringing the total to 21.

Secondly, inquests were in fact conducted into all the deaths, as is required by law, but, for some reason or another, the authorities chose to say that the cause of death was known in only six cases. The deputy commissioner's office had gone into each case. In one typical case of evasion, that of Prem Nath, son of Kedar Nath, the cause of death was stated as "not available" in the Delhi Administration's report. But according to a first information report lodged against one Kasturi Lal at the Janakpuri Police Station on March 10, 1982 under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, Prem Nath had allegedly been murdered inside the jail by a fellow convict.

A sampling of the case histories of a few inmates raises the kind of questions that Tihar Jail officials are not willing to answer. Karnail Singh, son of Joginder Singh, arrived in Tihar Jail on April 24, 1981 and died a little over a month later, on May 28, 1981. An alleged opium trafficker, his death was due to malfunctioning of the liver, according



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Tihar Jail: shrouded in mystery

to D.K. Dass, inspector-general (prisons). The report sent to the Home Ministry says cause of death is unknown. An enquiry conducted by Sub-Divisional Magistrate S.C. Gupta discovered that he had died due to "overconsumption" of opium.

Unnatural Causes: The same mixture of conflicting reports and quick deaths runs through the list. A French drug addict, Galiana Lovelist Wrist, was sent to Tihar Jail on March 30, 1981, and died a week later on April 8, of "severe pu... condition aggravated by a previo... of drug addiction". The inquest re... available. Badri Prashad, facing ... ping charge, was received by Tih... February 15, 1980 and died on June ... in Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan ... Hospital—which figures in most of ... aths. The cause: "mental" illness, ... to the inquest conducted by S.R. ... senior official of the Delhi Admini...

The largest question mark is s... the case of 18-year-old Karuna ... undertrial who was arrested on a ... possessing arms, was sent to Tiha... April 17, 1981 and died on July 1, 19... jail. Sub-Divisional Magistrate G... his report to the Delhi Administra... May but it has not been made pu... sources at the Tis Hazari mortuary, ... autopsy was conducted on his body ... corpse bore injury marks—which ... that Jana was tortured. Despite ... equivocal reference to the torture ... inquest report, the Delhi Administra... not taken any action.

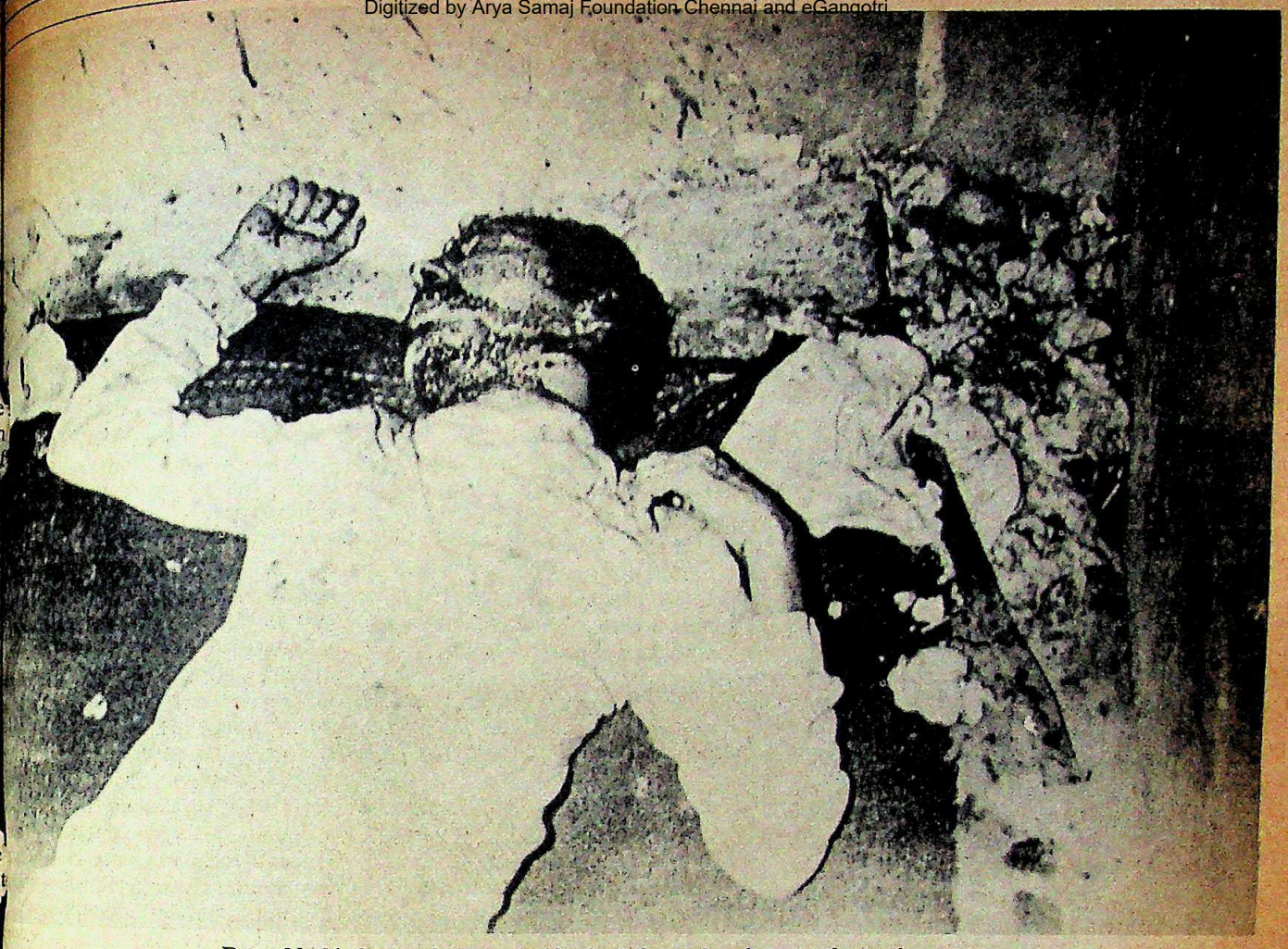
In the case of the three dead p... who were left out of its list, th... Administration is turning a blind e... of the officials concerned—D... Governor S.L. Khurana, Home S... P.V. Jaikrishnan, Dass, Deputy ... missioner Ashok Nath and Ti... Superintendent Chetan Dev Upadh... willing to talk about these deaths. A... to jail sources, the details are as fo...

► Madan Lal, a convicted murde... allegedly killed on April 14, 1981 by ... of jail officials because he had spo... against the mismanagement and th... haviour. A case under Section ... Indian Penal Code was registered ... Janakpuri Police Station on April 1... jail employees arrested, includi... Kumar, deputy superintendent ... Tyagi, assistant superintendent ... Singh, head warder, and Pran ... warder. Additional District Magistra... Arfi is conducting an enquiry;

► Hardeva, 55, son of Kesar Da... resident of Karol Bagh. He was ... under Section 307 of the Indian Pe... in 1979, and was sentenced to th... imprisonment on January 24, 1981 ... found unconscious in the jail on A... 1981 and was rushed to the LNJPN ... where he was declared dead. The ...

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Prem Nath's battered corpse inside the jail: stark pointer to the truth

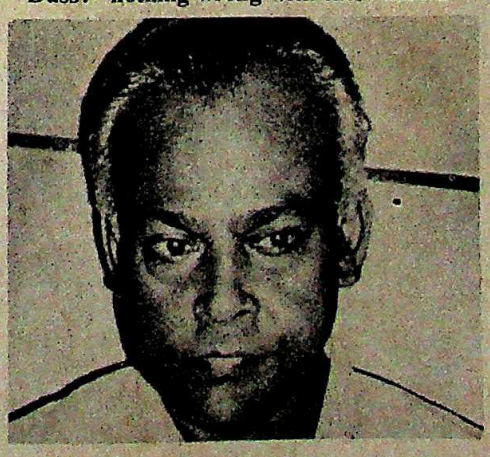
...ion collector B.S. Rana conducted ...ry but after some time he was shifted ...e on technical grounds. The new ...ting officer has not submitted his ...

...gat Singh, 35, a resident of Pooth ...village in West Delhi, was a lifer and ...completed nine years in jail. He was ...to the LNJPN Hospital suffering from ...ness and died of pulmonary oedema ...October 15, 1981. Sub-Divisional ...rate G.C. Saxena conducted an in... ...also his death and submitted his report ...Home Department. The Home ...y has not seen the report.

...ore pathetic is the case of Shankar, a ...-old undertrial who died on ...ber 11, 1981. The investigating officer ...ed him a TB patient, apparently heed... ...the jail officials who told him that ...r had a long history of TB and had ...en given "any treatment since 1977". ...the personal form was not made avail... ...The investigating officer even waived ...-mortem.

...UBERCULOSIS appears to be the ...mystery killer. According to jail sou... ...ers, of the 21, as many as seven died of pulmonary TB, two were murdered, two committed suicide, one was allegedly tortured to death, two died of overdoses of drugs and the remaining succumbed to high fever, cardiac-respiratory arrest, "pneumonic consolidation" of lungs and amoebic liver abscess. Asserts Dass: "There is nothing wrong with these deaths. All are due to natural causes otherwise we would have taken action. We found foul play in one or two cases, and cases were registered against the offenders."

Dass: "nothing wrong with these deaths"



Delhi Administration officials are not able to explain the exceptionally high incidence of TB deaths—in Delhi the death rate due to TB is only one in 1,000—and a professor of the Maulana Azad Medical College asserts that malnutrition cannot be the cause, though most jail inmates are from the lower-income group. "They are supposed to get better diet in the jail than what they eat outside," he says.

The jail authorities also could not produce evidence that the dead men had a record of TB when admitted, as would have been shown on the medical record form that is filled at the time of entry. According to unofficial sources, only two had any record of TB. Also, of the 2,300 inmates, only seven were in the TB ward and their number has rarely exceeded 10 in the last two years.

Doubts have also been raised about the inquest reports on the deaths. During 1980-81, one person was both deputy commissioner and inspector-general of prisons. R.K. Ahuja, an IAS officer of the Union Territories cadre, held both posts for a few months. Any junior official investigating jail affairs last year would have been in an embarrassing situation—the man who asked him to conduct the inquiry could also be hurt

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PRISONERS

Tihar's Death Row

OF THE 21 prisoners who died in Tihar Jail custody, 16 are listed below. The other five are the three whose names were withheld in the Delhi Administration's report, and Prem Nath and Shankar.

• **Bhola**, a resident of Gorakhpur district, Uttar Pradesh, was arrested in Delhi by the Badarpur police under Sections 392, 402, 353 and 307 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1981, on charges of dacoity, robbery, and attacking police personnel on duty. He was remanded to judicial custody on February 26, 1981, when he could not furnish bail. The jail records do not mention him as a TB patient.

Bhola was taken to LNJPN Hospital on June 20 where he died; his relatives were not informed of his death. Jail officials claim that he died of TB, but the Home Department of the Delhi Administration has not been informed of the cause of death. Additional District Magistrate Vivek Rai's inquest report has not reached the Union Home Ministry so far. INDIA TODAY has learnt that Bhola was running 106 degree temperature when taken to hospital and his plea for medical aid was ignored.

• **Giri Prem Bahadur** came to New Delhi from Madhya Pradesh looking for a job. He was arrested by the Delhi Police in Rajouri Garden colony on February 26 for allegedly kidnapping a child and was sent to Tihar Jail on February 28, 1981. According to the inspector-general of prisons, Bahadur died of cardio-respiratory arrest on July 1, 1981. But in the report sent to the Home Ministry the Delhi Administration expressed ignorance about the cause of death. Dr G.S. Jaiya, an Indian Administrative Service officer who inquired into the death submitted his report in October 1981 but it has been marked top secret. Delhi Administration officials refuse even to disclose whom they delivered Bahadur's body to.

• **Galiana Lovelist Wrist**, a French drug addict, was arrested by the Delhi Police in 1981 under Section 380, IPC at the Nizamuddin Railway Station. He was sent to Tihar Jail on March 30, 1981 and died in the jail hospital on April 8. At the time of admission, the jail doctor did not record any acute disease; still, the official report gave the cause of death as "severe pneumonic condition aggravated by previous history of drug addiction".

• **Karnail Singh**, son of Joginder Singh, was a resident of Delhi's walled city and was arrested twice under the Opium Act—two FIRS were lodged at Kotwali Police Station in Chandni Chowk: 1158/80 and 485/81. The first time he was bailed out. The second time, he arrived in Tihar Jail on April 24, 1981 and died on May 28, 1981 in hospital—after his liver malfunctioned, according to Inspector-General of Prisons Dass. However, the Home Ministry's report to Marxist MP H.S. Surjeet does not name the cause of death. Sub-Divisional Magistrate S.C. Gupta, appointed by the Delhi Administration to look into the death, found that he died of "overconsumption" of opium. How he procured opium inside the jail is not clear.

• **Badri Prashad** was arrested by the Sabzimandi police on a kidnapping charge and a case registered under Section 363, IPC. He was remanded to judicial custody on February 15, 1980 and died on June 26, 1981 in the LNJPN Hospital. S.R. Tyagi of the Delhi Administration found that Prashad died of "mental" illness, whatever that may mean.

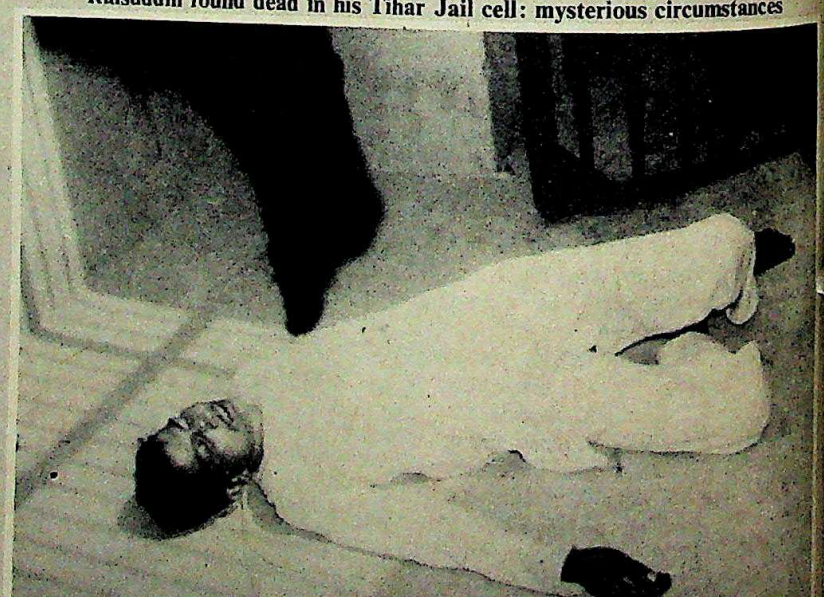
• **Karuna Jana** of Rajouri Garden, arrested for possessing arms illegally, came to Tihar Jail on April 17, 1981 and died on July 1, 1981 in jail. Gupta again conducted an inquiry, but the Home Ministry is not yet aware of the cause of Jana's death. INDIA TODAY's investigations reveal that he was tortured in jail and the investigating officer confirms this.

• **Ram Lakhan**, a Delhi resident, was arrested by the Sadar Bazar police under the Opium Act and FIR No. 100/79 registered. He was remanded to judicial custody on September 7,1981, fell ill the same month and was removed to the LNJPN Hospital where he died on September 25, 1981. An inquest was conducted by Dr G.S. Jaiya and the report says that he died of "ruptured amoebic liver abscess".

• **Niyam Ahmed**, a resident of Ghonda, a trans-Yamuna slum, was arrested by the Jama Masjid police on September 21, 1981, on a charge of burglary. An FIR, No. 590/81 under section 457/380, IPC was registered. He was sent to Tihar Jail on September 22, 1981 and he died there on September 27. The jail records do not mention any acute illness or injuries. The Home Ministry has not been informed about the cause of death but jail officials claim that Ahmed had asthma which ultimately proved fatal. Delhi Administration officials refuse to divulge the autopsy report and the inquest findings of Nathu Singh, executive magistrate, in December 1981.

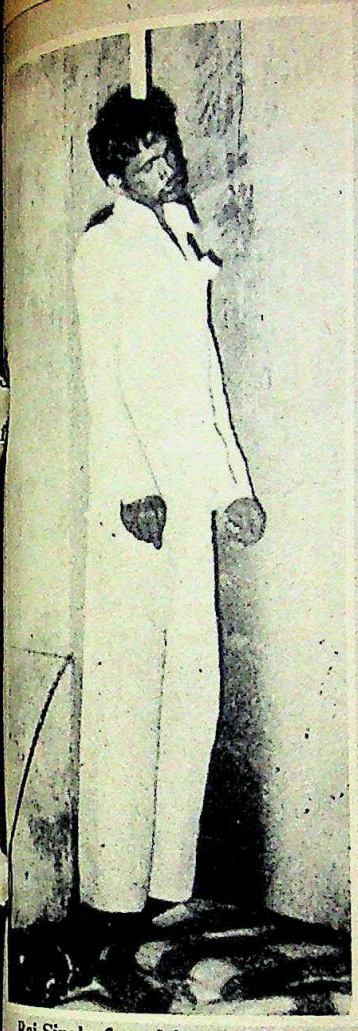
• **Rawal Mal**, a Janakpuri jhuggi dweller, was arrested by the Adarsh Nagar police on September 10, 1981, along with some others on a kidnapping charge. FIR No. 590/81 under Section 307, IPC was registered against him and he was sent to

Raisuddin found dead in his Tihar Jail cell: mysterious circumstances



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Raj Singh: forced into suicide?

Tihar Jail on September 11, 1981. According to jail officials Rawal Mal was a TB patient and when he complained of severe chest pains he was admitted to the TB Hospital at Kingsway Camp where he died on October 15, 1981. S.R. Tyagi conducted the inquiry and recorded death due to "pulmonary TB".

• **Mam Raj,** son of Bem Ram, a resident of Sabzimandi in old Delhi, was picked in by the Sabzimandi police on October 8, 1981, under the Gambling Act. He was sent to Tihar Jail the next day, and died in the TB hospital on October 15, 1981. The jail's medical staff say that Mam Raj was a TB patient but his family told INDIA TODAY that he never had TB. There is no official confirmation of the cause of death and when asked, the Delhi Administration told the Home Ministry that the cause of death was "not available".

• **Raisuddin,** son of Mohammed Din, resident of Patparganj, was arrested by the Alipur police under Sections 302/364, IPC. He was a lifer and committed suicide by hanging himself in Tihar Jail on April 17, 1982. S.R. Tyagi conducted an inquiry and concluded that there was "no foul play" and that Raisuddin took his life "due to desperation".

• **Babu Ram,** son of Sadhu Chand, a resident of Aligarh, was arrested by the Delhi Railway Station police under the Opium Act in 1981. He died in the TB hospital on February 2, 1982. Executive Magistrate D.B. Kubba conducted an inquiry. Babu Ram had no record of TB in jail.

• **Harbans Lal** of Seelampur was arrested by the Tilak Marg police under Section 356/324, IPC on November 3, 1981. Another case under the Arms Act was registered against him by the Seemapuri police and FIR No. 553/81 lodged. He could not get bail and was sent to Tihar Jail on November 4, 1981. He was later transferred to camp jail, a temporary jail next to Tihar Jail, where he died on January 20, 1982. Jail sources say that Harbans Lal was not suffering from any disease. A senior executive magistrate was appointed to look into the death. However, the Home Ministry still doesn't know the cause. His death was, it is claimed, also due to TB.

• **Joginder Singh,** a resident of Rana Pratap Bagh, was arrested under the Arms Act by the Delhi Railway Station police and jailed in October 1981. He committed suicide on November 12, 1981.

• **Raj Singh,** son of Sarup Singh, was a resident of Sultanpuri, a resettlement colony in West Delhi. He faced over a dozen charges including burglary, theft and cheating. He committed suicide in Tihar Jail on May 17, 1982 by hanging himself with a wire from the ceiling fan rod. In the note left behind he accused the jail authorities of not providing enough food and other facilities as stipulated in the jail manual. The note said: "I am compelled to commit suicide because prisoners are insecure inside Tihar Jail. Criminals threaten the undertrials and the jail authorities connive with them." Sub-Divisional Magistrate Gupta is looking into the allegations.

• **Ashok Kumar,** son of Manak Ram and a Maharashtrian, was sent to the camp jail at Tihar after he was arrested under the Arms Act early this year. He was admitted to the jail hospital on May 15, 1982 for the treatment of a heart ailment. According to jail officials he was sent to the LNJPN Hospital twice last month for a medical check-up. On June 21, he was again rushed to the hospital at 11.30 a.m. complaining of pains in the region of the heart. He died that night. The deputy commissioner has deputed an official to look into the cause of death.

by the inquiry. After the media cried foul, the post of inspector-general of prisons was taken away from the deputy commissioner in late 1981 and the financial commissioner, Delhi Administration, made the ex-officio inspector-general.

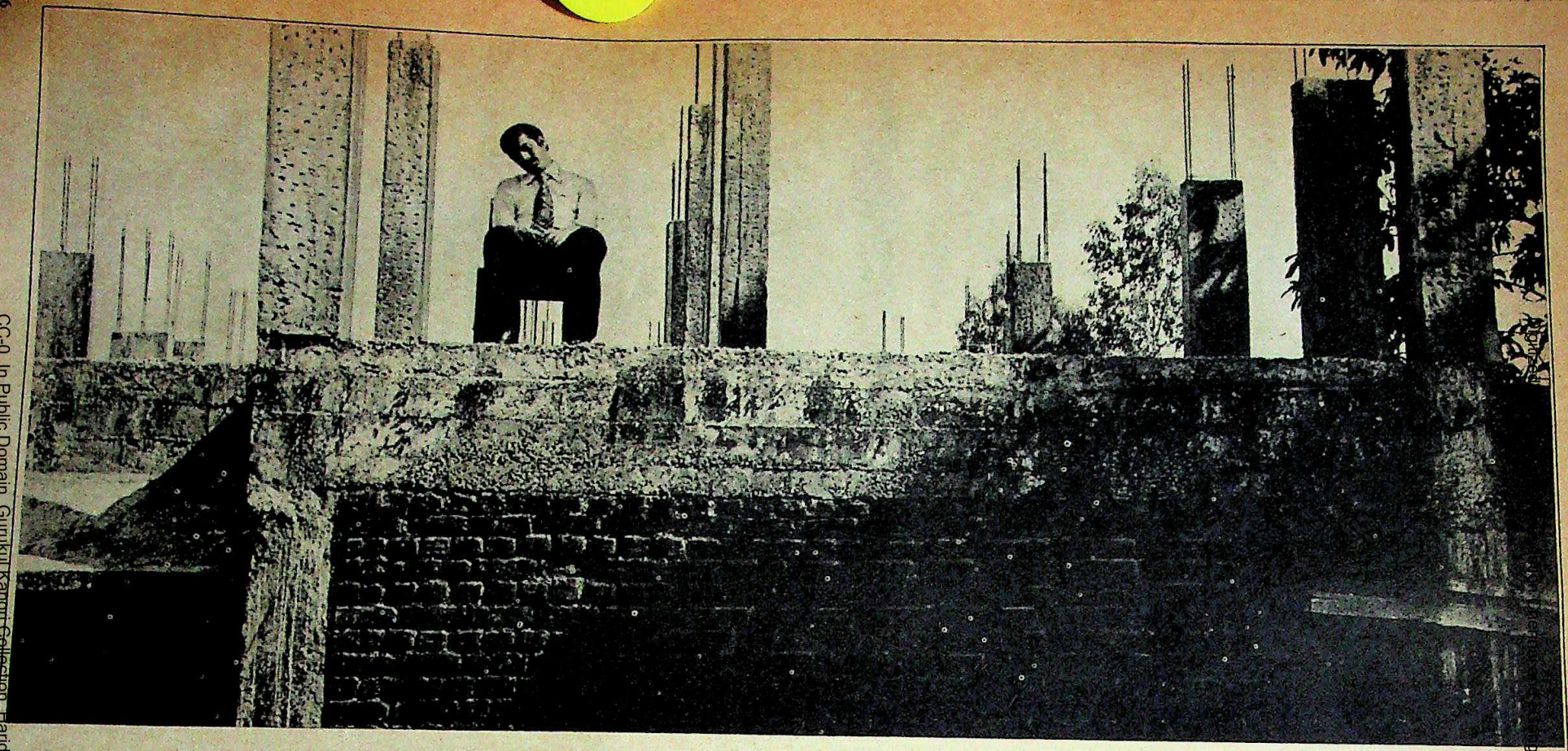
Notoriety: The largest number of deaths took place during the tenure of jail superintendent B.L. Vij. His stewardship of the 24-year-old jail, which has always held 2,000 or more inmates although it was built for only 1,500, saw the prison scale new heights of notoriety in the press. Over a dozen writ petitions were filed in courts relating to torture and maltreatment of the prisoners and illegal terminations of the staff service. According to sources, Vij directed his efforts towards making life easier for star inmates such as Charles Sobhraj. One official report says: "While genuinely sick people were denied medical facilities and milk, others were getting anything from wine to women."

Unofficial sources affirm that many of those who died inside the jail had complained of torture and requested medical aid but their complaints had been ignored. Says a warder: "Vij never cared to look into the genuine grievances of the prisoners and used to throw their representations into the waste-paper basket." Those who complained included those who had no 'godfathers' to look after their interests. Raj Singh, who allegedly committed suicide on May 15, 1981, left a note saying that "the jail was not safe for the undertrials". In a grotesque sequel to his death, another note which said that his eyes should be donated was found to be fake by the officer conducting the inquest.

Official Action: As the Delhi Administration appeared not to take notice of the goings-on, the Union Home Ministry and the courts stepped in. Former home minister Zail Singh visited Tihar Jail on September 1, 1981 along with Khurana and was offered a bottle of liquor by a convict. On the heels of this incident Vij and other officials were transferred. Khurana appointed a committee to look into jail affairs, and the report was submitted in March 1982.

The Supreme Court directed district and sessions judges to look into specific charges against senior jail officials. In a 234-page report, District and Sessions Judge Jagdish Chand pointed out the widespread corruption inside the jail and suggested remedies. As a result, three assistant superintendents and resident medical officers were suspended and a full-time deputy inspector-general (prisons) appointed. Upadhyaya, an officer of the Rajasthan Jail Service, was brought in to clean the Augean stables. But none of the investigations so far has touched upon the issue of deaths in custody, and the notorious prison is obviously set for another shaking. —PRABHU CHAWLA

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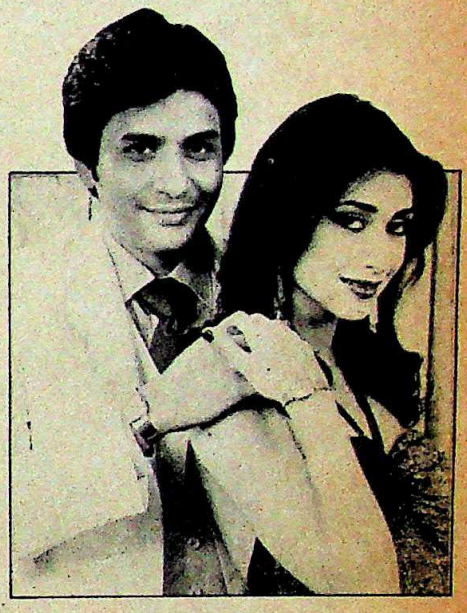
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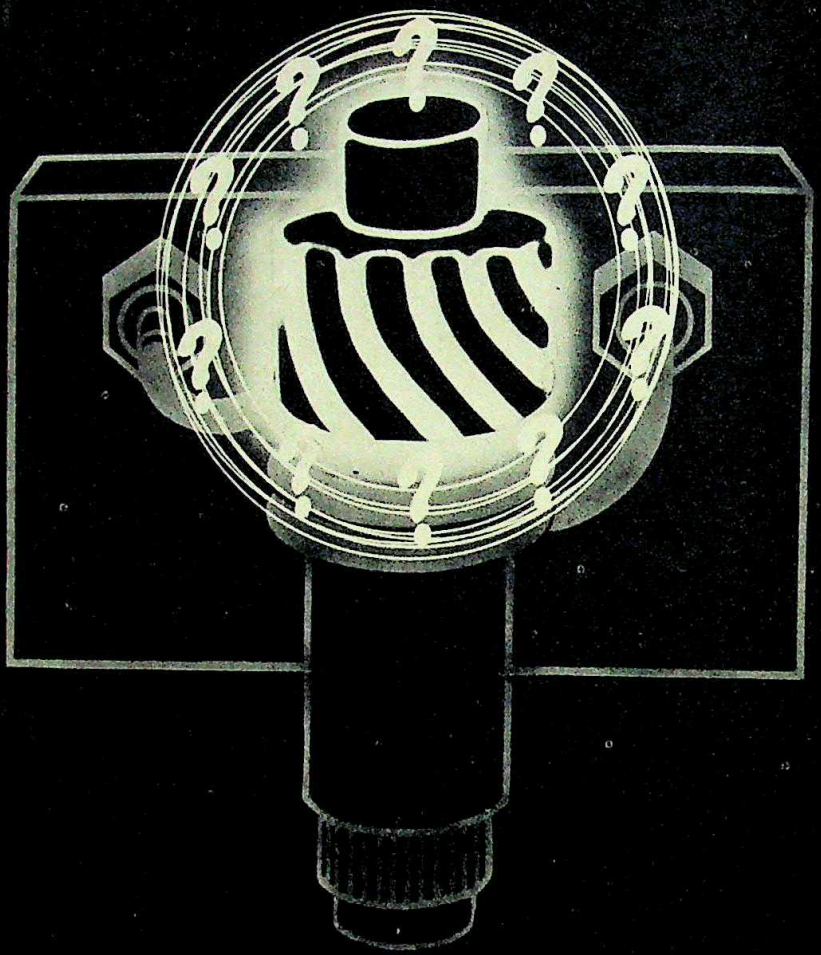
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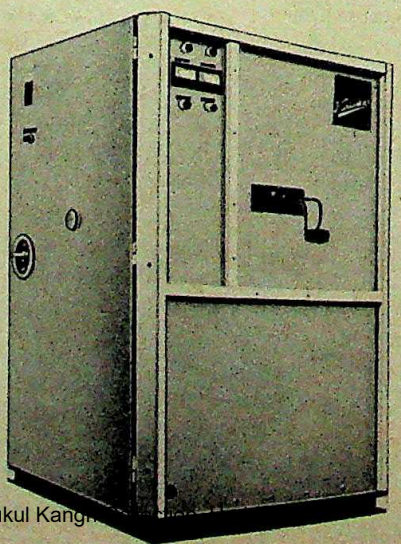
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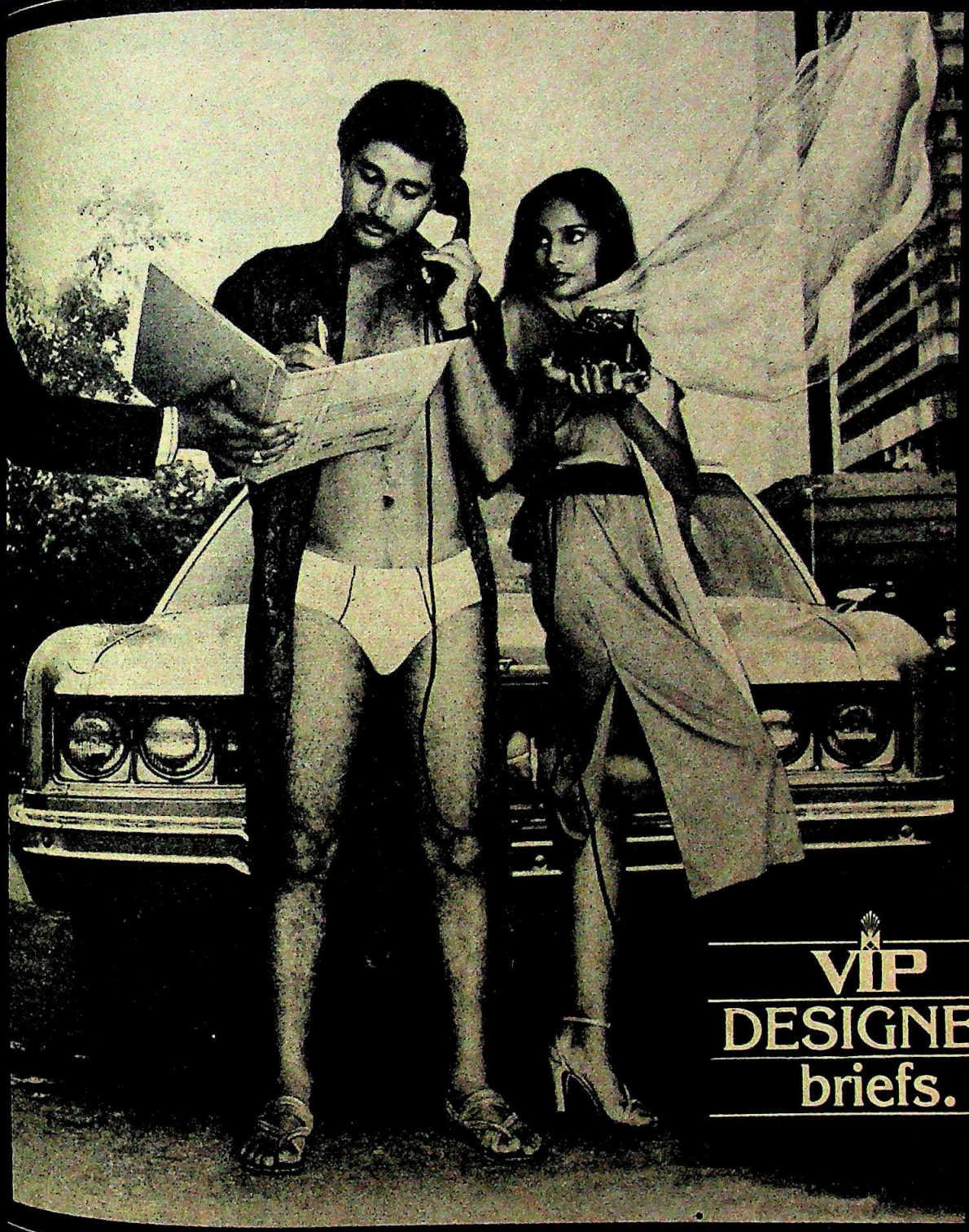
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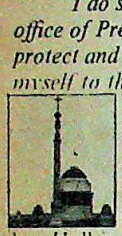
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GIANI ZAIL SINGH

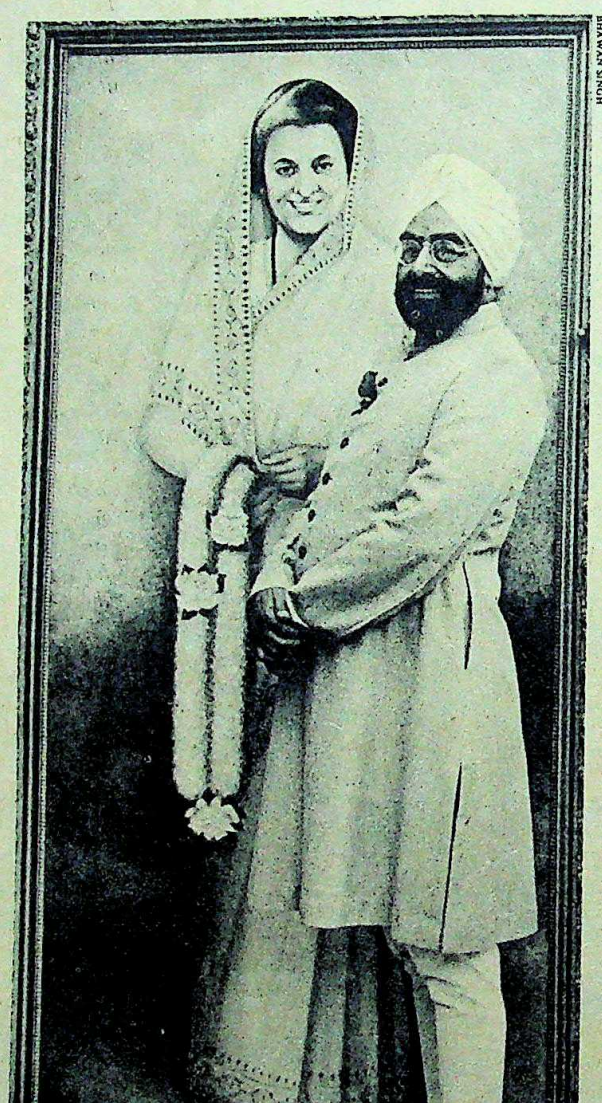
The Making Of A President

"I do swear in the name of God that I will faithfully execute the office of President of India and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law, and that I will devote myself to the service and well-being of the people of India."



EVERY five years, unless circumstances dictate otherwise, that stark and solemn oath resonates through the historic Darbar Hall in Rashtrapati Bhavan as a new President takes the oath of office. On July 25, Giani Zail Singh in all probability will stand beneath the exquisite Belgian chandelier that hangs from the 180-foot-high dome in the Darbar Hall, resplendent in the silky white *achkan* he favours, to take the oath of office that will officially make him the country's seventh President. The words he will repeat after the Chief Justice of India are designed to strike an appropriately sombre note. They were chosen with care by the authors of India's Constitution to match the dignity of the office they herald. They impose upon the oath-taker an awesome responsibility; to assume symbolic charge of the welfare of the 680 million people who constitute the largest democracy in the world; to rise above factionalism, political colours and personal prejudice. In that brief, 52-word statement is contained the ideals and aspirations that embody the highest office in the land: stature, eminence, distinction, and, above all, impartiality.

Yet, as the countdown to the presidential election reached its final stages last fortnight, there was only a disquieting awareness of the creeping gap between appearances and reality; a growing feeling that the very dignity of the office was in danger. It was all-too-evident in the acrimony of petty debates arising from the still-born dialogue between the ruling party and the Opposition over the possibility of a consensus candidate for the job—a debate that made a mockery of the solemnity of the office in question. It was equally evident in the sharply divided welcome given to the candidate, Giani Zail Singh, a man whose loyalties may be too deeply-entrenched to be ignored or overshadowed by the office he will occupy. It was, at its worst, an all too tragic confirmation that far from being above it, the Presidency has merely been reduced to just another pawn in the perennial political power game, perhaps more important than the [illegible] potently less than the queen.



BHAWAN SINGH

Zail Singh poses before a portrait of Mrs Gandhi: oft-proven loyalty

Awry Calculation: Considering the manner in which [illegible] sides played their opening moves, the forgettable events [illegible] fortnight were but inevitable [illegible] ame for the abasement was [illegible] equally. The Opposition, licking [illegible] wounds from the May elections [illegible] sualised a perfect opportunity [illegible] throw Mrs Gandhi on the defensive [illegible] tossing the idea of a consensus candidate into the ring. Knowing full well that Mrs Gandhi would be in no mood to oblige, the ageing theoretician and the Opposition calculated that she may, however, opt for bolstering her public image by capitulating.

Their calculations, as events revealed, went terribly awry. Mrs Gandhi, secure in the knowledge that the Congress(I) commanded a sufficient lead in the electoral college to get her candidate elected, declined to fall into their trap and shrewdly turned the tables on them. Before the race started, the presidential question had slipped out of opposition control and into the hands of the ruling party.

As events indicated, Mrs Gandhi pondered long and hard over whom the final selection should be. But in her characteristic style, she kept everyone guessing long after she had made up her mind. INDIA TODAY has learnt that on June 8, 1982, Giani Zail Singh was told by two separate sources—Petroleum Minister Shiv Shankar in the morning and Rajiv Gandhi in the afternoon, that he was the likely candidate and should prepare himself. The Giani was chosen when the search for a south Indian candidate, to maintain a long-standing tradition, ended. But the two chief contenders for the post, Defence Minister R. Venkataraman and Foreign Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao were counted out because their Brahmin caste would come in the way of widespread acceptance among southern politicians. Other than that, the merits of the rose were no more than skin deep.

Guessing Game: Unfortunately [illegible] a large number of her own party members were kept guessing. Even as Zail Singh was told to pack his bags, so to speak, Mrs Gandhi launched a well planned campaign to involve as many party functionaries as possible. Thus, between June 8 and

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didate was announced, Mrs Gandhi ed more than one dozen cabinet sters and chief ministers, half a dozen arty chiefs not to mention the leaders main Opposition parties.

In fact, it was only on June 22, the date which the Congress(I) Parliamentary (CPB-I) was meeting, that she decided hoose her choice. Before the meeting ly began, Rajiv Gandhi had spoken and every member of the CPB(I) about 's candidature. Mrs Gandhi while g over the meeting, did place before rd members the discussions she had Opposition leaders but, as a shrewd left it to them to decide the es. And the dozen CPB(I) members to the pre-programmed directive to "authorise the AICC(I) president" nate the candidate which she ulti- did by signing the nomination papers Zail Singh.

key configuration in her calculations the fact that the overall reaction to her candidate, Giani Zail Singh, could negative one (*see box*). The media, was the first to react, portrayed the public's feelings. The *Statesman*'s echoed the broad media view when stated that "There is nothing in Mr gh's past to indicate that he might be by the kind of doubt and anguish Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed had before the Emergency ordinance, or that he stature and national acceptability of ndra Prasad, Dr Radhakrishnan or ir Hussain . . ."

The most scathing attack, predictably, ted from Charan Singh. In his letter Gandhi, the crusty Lok Dal leader The people in general will not be far if they see in your choice an attempt ke another nail in the coffin of the ratic institutions of the country."

Approbation: Naturally, the ruling and its associates hailed the selection rident chorus of approbation. Mrs , they realised, had selected a person was not only loyal to her but owed his ic rise to the Nehru-Gandhi family, a of gratitude publicly acknowledged by ngh on innumerable occasions. He is remembered for having described the younger Sanjay Gandhi as his *rah* (saviour) and for having later pre- that Rajiv Gandhi would turn out to another Nehru. Last week, speaking at dinagar, Zail Singh made no bones where his loyalties lay. "If my leader said I should pick up a broom and be a ner," he said, "I would have done that. hoose me to be President."

Loyalty apart, Zail Singh's selection facilitated by the current political calcu- with Punjab in turmoil, his choice would

> ***About the only ground on which Mr Zail Singh's selection may seem appropriate is that he is a member of a distinguished and valiant minority community and it is in the fitness of things that a Sikh should be the next President.*** —THE STATESMAN
>
> ***Clearly, Mr Zail Singh's main qualification would appear to be his total and simple loyalty to the prime minister . . . The 'loyalty' of the President must be to the Constitution and the law, which he is by oath committed to "serve, protect and defend", and not to any individual howsoever powerful or popular.***
> —INDIAN EXPRESS
>
> ***In today's climate of rising corruption, the Giani stands apart in possessing an integrity that has never been questioned . . . His son has not blossomed forth as an industrialist or a businessman . . . Such a man is indubitably of sound presidential timbre.***
> —THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
>
> ***She (Mrs Gandhi) has picked on the best candidate available. For Giani Zail Singh can be expected to perform the functions of Head of State with due dignity as well as in harmony with the head of the Government.***
> —THE TIMES OF INDIA
>
> ***There is nothing wrong in Mrs Gandhi choosing, at this critical juncture of the nation's life, a person who can be depended upon for coordinated and harmonious functioning at the Centre.*** —NATIONAL HERALD
>
> ***This attitude once again betrays her anti-democratic and authoritarian outlook. The President must agree with her, the judges must agree with her, the state governments must agree with her, everybody else must agree with her; otherwise it is an attempt to weaken her Government.*** —NEW AGE
>
> ***There is no doubt that Zail Singh will implement the prime minister's instructions*** in toto. ***There won't be any differences between the two. Singh's loyalty is not the only reason for this. Quite simply, he has no opinions of his own.*** —EENADU
>
> ***His candidature would be a concession to amoral politics and indecency in public life.*** —BLITZ

net two birds: it would symbolise the importance of the Sikh community to the nation by giving it a voice above all others and give Rashtrapati Bhavan a tenant from a backward caste. The reaction in Punjab has already been positive. To the Opposition's astonishment, Zail Singh was able to create dissensions within the Akalis. Though the Longowal group of the Akalis, the biggest by far, has yet to take a stand, Zail Singh's candidature was supported by Ravi Inder Singh, a speaker during the former Akali-Janata regime in Punjab. Regional parties like the AIADMK, and DMK, J & K's National Conference and the Indian Union Muslim League sided with him. Said a senior Cabinet minister: "By sponsoring Gianiji's name Mrs Gandhi proved beyond doubt that she can influence a number of Opposition parties as well."

Added Sukhdev Prashad, a Congress (I) MP and chairman, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes cell of the AICC(I): "We feel proud that for the first time such a prestigious and highest post has been offered to a person belonging to a backward class." Dismissing the Opposition allegation about Giani's intellectual calibre, Stephen retorted by saying: "If Mr Brezhnev comes here and speaks in Russian to be translated by an interpreter, it is acceptable. Then why must Mr Zail Singh necessarily speak in English."

IN THE ultimate analysis, there is little doubt that of all the considerations Mrs Gandhi weighed, the one that counted most was dependability—utter and unquestioned dependability. In Gaini Zail Singh, the prime minister has found herself a presidential candidate who will do her bidding and give no cause for complaint. If the *Indian Express* was unduly harsh in entitling its editorial comment "Caligula's Horse'—a reference to the Roman emperor Caligula who fancied himself a god, erected a temple to himself and appointed his favourite horse as a priest—it none the less underscored the point that the new incumbent is more loyal than the Queen herself. Added Gandhi-baiter Arun Shourie of the *Indian Express*, with characteristic acerbity: "Mrs Gandhi spits at the country one day by foisting Bhajan Lal on it, she mocks at it the next by foisting Zail Singh."

Mrs Gandhi's calculations in fact run much deeper, for her real test will be the 1985 elections which are already looming half way through her current term. If the current mid-term indications are any judge, Mrs Gandhi and her party have a tough battle ahead of them. The May mini-elections gave the party little cause for confidence and the antics of her chief ministers in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala cannot but take away from the party's vote

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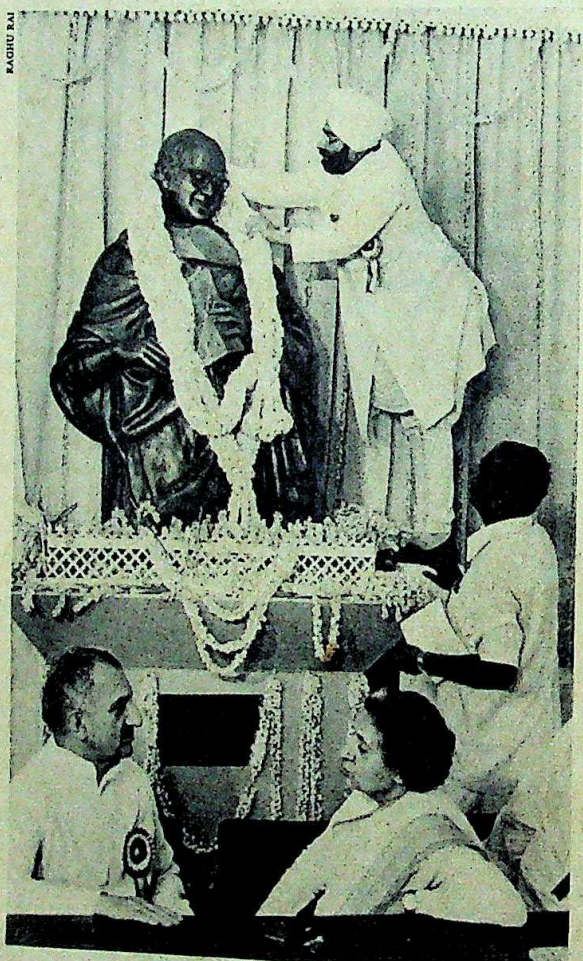
bank if matters are permitted to continue the way they are.

Obviously, in viewing the future, Mrs Gandhi has learnt a good lesson from the past. The only time that that the Indian President came into his own was during the slow collapse of the Janata and Lok Dal-led regimes in 1979 when the country was dangerously rudderless for weeks on end and the only visible semblance of authority was the office of the President. Says constitutional expert Atul Setalvad: "The President has a valid role to play in the choice of a prime minister, dismissing a government which refuses to leave even if it has lost a majority, and dissolving the House. In practical terms, this is significant when the party position is not clear."

Unseemly Controversy: The Precedent for that is still starkly etched in memory. Incumbent Sanjiva Reddy's brief moment of glory was, however dimmed by unseemly controversy as he steered the country through its most inglorious hour. Though judicial opinion is divided, constitutional experts like H.M. Seervai, author of the *Constitutional Law of India* feel that Reddy acted hastily in accepting the resignation of the Desai government before a new government was formed. The country was, thus, in the unique position of having no ministerial head of the executive while leader of the Opposition Y.B. Chavan went through a fruitless exercise in trying to put a government together.

At this point the controversy heightens. Should Reddy have gone back to Morarji Desai, leader of the 205 member Janata Party instead of plumbing, as he did, for Charan Singh who had just about 80? Says Setalvad: "His decision in inviting Charan Singh was grossly improper as it was his duty to invite a person who was likely to command majority support in the House and there was no reason to assume that he would enjoy such support—as in fact he did not." Others, like C.K. Daftary, advocate general at that time, held different views and advised the President accordingly.

Still greater controversy was around the corner. Charan Singh had become prime minister using his hated Congress(I) as a crutch. In an event which everyone but he could plainly foresee, the Congress(I) suddenly pulled back its support reducing Charan Singh's ill-fated ministry to a minority. While that regime came to a not unexpected ignominious end, it offered Reddy another dilemma. Should he accept the outgoing prime minister's advise and dissolve the Lok Sabha, calling for fresh elections, or should he turn to Jagjivan Ram, by now leader of the Janata Party, the largest single group in the House. Reddy's fateful choice in favour of dissolution changed the course of history. Had it been otherwise, Mrs Gandhi might still have been in the boondocks. As it is, she came back to power with a thumping majority. And, the role of the President had been critical. Clearly, if history were to repeat itself in 1985, if the unsavoury experience of 1979 were to recur, a friend in Rashtrapati Bhavan could provide the make-or-break difference.


RAGHU RAI

Zail Singh garlanding Sanjay Gandhi's statue last week: debts of the past

Writes C.S. Pandit in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, "Mrs Gandhi has perhaps preferred a more dependable colleague for Rashtrapati Bhavan who would act in the party's favour in a possible crisis and will not let his own personal ambitions to cloud his judgment." If the doubts run deep, they do so for good reason. The country's increasingly degenerate politics has clearly emaciated the office of the President just as brutally as it has its other institutions. As one analyst put it: "The manner of a president's election has always reflected the political ties of the time."

Watershed: It was hardly surp then, that the death of Dr Zakir H represented such a major watershed evolution of the Indian Presidency. no coincidence that the watershed have occurred at a time when Mrs G was savouring her new-found politica cle in 1969, battling the Congress old by plunging the Presidency into contro In her bid for power, Mrs Gandhi doned the party's candidate, Sanjiva —ironically enough, the man who Singh will succeed—ranged her behind his rival, V.V. Giri, and tually bulldozed her candidat rough. Giri found the Preside difficult act to follow. Preceding were men of infinite stature and g Two of the three—Radhakris and Zakir Hussain—were far remo from politics and the country's President, Rajendra Prasad, effortlessly above partisan politic contrast, Mrs Gandhi's presid appointees have gradually but tively pushed the Presidency int mud and grime of the political (*see box*).

However, the creeping politi tion of the President's office has aggravated by the ambivalence which the job is generally reg Ever since the Indian Constitu was adopted, the President's Con tional position has become an issu frequent debate. But too many areas still remain. The original cept, as B.R. Ambedkar, one of giants of the Independence m succinctly put it, was that the P dent "is the head of the state not the executive. He represents nation but does not rule the na He is the symbol of the nation place in the administration is th a ceremonial device on a seal by the naton's decisions are known".

Function: Ambedkar's part choice of phrase—ceremonial on a seal—inevitably gave rise to the ide rubber stamp President, a concept despite heated debates, was never resolved. In addition, the Constitution it abundantly clear that as long a executive—the elected Government of day was in order and functioning legally President was obliged to act according desires. To plug any loopholes Mrs Gh rushed through the 42nd Constitu Amendment during the Emergency in obliging the President to act in accord with whatever the Government of the

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...own. Oddly enough, the Janata ...ment which took over from Mrs ...'s Emergency regime, made no at... to undo this particular clause. The ...endment; enacted in 1978, merely ...ed the President to ask the ...ment to reconsider a particular ...—a lever which no President has ...ployed.

...e Janata Party's hesitation was, no ...based on much the same principle ...rs Gandhi believes in—using the ...t for political consolidation. Shortly after it came to power, the Morarji Desai government asked acting President B.D. Jatti to dissolve six state assemblies in May 1977 and order fresh elections. The diminutive Jatti, realising the move would mean the possible loss of six states to the Congress(I), baulked for a full 24 hours. It was only after a stern letter from Desai, reminding Jatti of the limits of his constitutional authority, and demonstrations outside his house, that spurred Jatti to belated action.

It is ironical that the same group of politicians who were able to blatantly force Jatti's hand, last month started pushing strongly for a consensus candidate, knowing full well the implications of a mute head of state. Their original choice Vice-President Hidayatullah, has performed his second role as Rajya Sabha Speaker with admirable and consistent impartiality and integrity, not hesitating to rap the ruling party on the knuckles when he felt it was required. In their collective but unspoken view, if a dead heat were to result in 1985, Hidayatullah would have been inclined to give the Opposition

...TERVIEW

"Happy And Humble"

IN MANY ways Giani Zail Singh, ...is the very personification of a success ...ory. He was born in a mud hut and now ...the end of a colourful career he will ...most certainly be the next occupant of ...w Delhi's palatial Rashtrapati Bhavan.

At every stage of his career he has ...to battle heavy odds. He founded the ...ngh Mandal Movement in the princely ...te of Faridkot in pre-Independence ...dia and was imprisoned for his pains. ...ch later, as chief minister of Punjab he ...lked the tightrope for seven years, ba...cing different communities and ...tions successfully.

Zail Singh's candidature is uni... in many ways. He will be the first ...k President and he will also be the ...e from a backward caste. He met ...respondent PRABHU CHAWLA *...n after his nomination. Excerpts:*

Q. How do you feel about your ...pending elevation to the post of ...President?

A. I feel happy and humble.

Q. Don't you think that it is ...irement from active politics? How ...a person like you reconcile to this ...ation?

A. It depends on what you mean by ...ive politics. I consider that my tenure ...President of the Republic would be a ...ntinuation of service to the country, in ...capacity and a role that are different ...m the ones I have played so far. ...vertheless, it is service, and nothing ...e.

Q. Why have you been selected? Do ...think religious or caste considerations ...e played any role in your selection? Do ...agree that your selection has some...to do with your unflinching loyalty ...the Nehru-Gandhi family?

A. These questions could more appropriately be answered by my party high command. All I can say is that they were kind enough to find me an appropriate candidate for the office. Naturally, in coming to this conclusion, I am sure they have taken into consideration all factors relevant to, and in keeping with, the secular principles of the Congress. As regards loyalty, I have always been loyal to Congress principles as espoused by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Shrimati Indira Gandhi.

Q. Since Mrs Gandhi is responsible for your selection, don't you think that you would be influenced by Mrs Gandhi's personality while taking decisions? Opposition leaders also think that you will not be an independent President.

> ***"I consider that my tenure as President of the Republic would be a continuation of service to the country, a capacity and a role that are different from the ones I have played so far. Nevertheless, it is service, and nothing else."***

A. It is erroneous to envisage a confrontationist relationship between the President and the prime minister. This is, basically, a wrong approach and runs counter to the spirit and letter of the Constitution. It is also fallacious to assume that unless the President plays an overruling role, he has no role at all. I do not agree with this assumption.

Q. Opposition leaders have made serious allegations on the basis of the Gurdev Commission Report. Do you have any comment?

A. There is nothing in the Gurdev Commission Report on the basis of which any "serious allegation" could be made against me. There is nothing impinging on my integrity or bona fides. The position has also been clarified by Darbara Singh, chief minister of Punjab, in his press statement.

Q. Do you think that the President has any role to play in Indian politics? Particularly after the various amendments, which have reduced the President to a rubber stamp?

A. The role of the President is very well delineated in our Constitution. Many Constitutional experts have expressed their opinions on the various amendments made in the Constitution.

Q. Do you think that the President should be totally loyal to the prime minister or should scrutinise his/her decisions judiciously?

A. The President is to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the Government is carried on in his name. In this view there could be no contradiction between him and the prime minister. In any event, as I have said in answer to other questions, the President's role is delineated by the Constitution.

Q. What are the major problems which the country is facing today?

A. There are several tasks before the country today: to preserve the integrity of the country; to counter fissiparous tendencies; to address ourselves to the stupendous task of economic development; to ensure stability; to uphold values of socialism, secularism and democracy; to play our rightful role in international affairs, particularly ensuring world peace and equitable prosperity among nations—to cite a few. In fulfilling these tasks I would certainly like to play the rightful role assigned to me.

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more of a hearing if only to preserve the dignity of the office and stave off unnecessary controversy.

The Opposition, however, still a victim of the foot-in-mouth disease that has divided its ranks, once again bungled badly in their strategy. A recap of the sordid events leading up to the final and unequal squaring off between Zail Singh and H.R. Khanna, the Opposition's ultimate choice, clearly shows that they were outmanoeuvred at every step of the way.

On May 31, Charan Singh penned his epistle to Mrs Gandhi requesting her to consult the Opposition leaders on the choice of the presidential candidate. Mrs Gandhi, in characteristic style, only deigned to reply on June 17. In between, ensued a war of nerves that revealed Mrs Gandhi's strategy for what it was—an effort to discredit the idea of a consensus candidate in the public mind. While her general secretaries were busy launching a propaganda campaign against a consensus candidate and preparing the path for Zail Singh's announcement, she herself in a shrill public tirade at Bhubaneswar termed the Opposition plea for a consensus candidate a "gimmick" and accused them of creating hurdles in her path. Back in Delhi, AICC(I) General Secretary K. Moopanar, orchestrated a press conference at which he read out verbatim from a paper prepared by the prime minister's office which said, in effect, that "the President should always be a person who sees eye to eye with the prime minister".

Opposition Moves: The Opposition, meanwhile, were busy cutting the ground from under their own feet. On June 16, Charan Singh dispatched a second letter to Mrs Gandhi proposing Hidayatullah's name as the consensus candidate because "he has the great advantage of being a non-party man and therefore above all partisan politics like Dr Radhakrishnan and Dr Zakir Husain". The Opposition, however, neglected one small detail—they proposed Hidayatullah's name without consulting him first, thus embarrassing both Hidayatullah and themselves. The Opposition also failed to realise that by proposing Hidayatullah, they were revealing their cards early and also sealing the candidate's fate in the bargain.

IN HER reply to Charan Singh, Mrs Gandhi ignored Hidayatullah's name and rejected the Opposition's plea on the grounds that it was "hardly fair to propagate the view that only non-party candidates will be non-partisan in office". By stalling the issue and keeping her own cards close to her chest, Mrs Gandhi was playing her favourite game of keeping the Opposition guessing and forcing them into committing embarrassing errors.

The half-a-dozen meetings held by the Opposition after Hidayatullah's rejection Mrs Gandhi failed to throw up a candidate on whom they could all agree. At one of the meetings, Jagjivan Ram suggested that the Oppositon should put up Field Marshal Manekshaw as the consensus candidate. Even in her eventual meetings with Opposition leaders, Mrs Gandhi played her hand shrewdly, preferring to meet them individually and suggesting different names to different people, throwing the Opposition into further confusion. When BJP president Atal Behari Vajpayee called on her and raised Zail Singh's name knowing full well that he is anathema to the BJP, Vajpayee when told of her choice, retorted: "If you want a Sikh candidate, why not Swaran Singh?"

Bungling: But even after Mrs Gandhi had made her choice public, the Opposition bungling continued. In a hasty and ill-judged move, they selected the 72-year-old communist leader, Hiren Mukherjee. It was only later that it dawned on them that Mukherjee's name did not figure as a voter in the electoral list—a requisite for any presidential candidate. Further, there was a number of opposition leaders who refused to support a communist candidate. In fact, the prospect of a rabidly right-wing party like the BJP supporting a CPI man for President bordered on the ridiculous.

Inevitably, when the second round

H.R. KHANNA

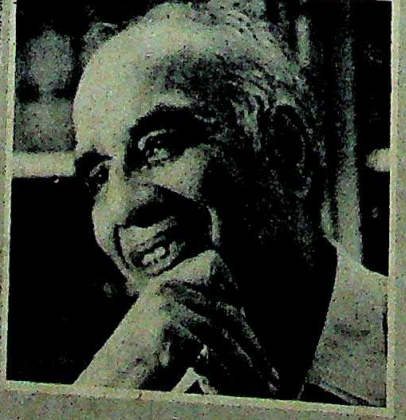
Valuing Wishes

HANS RAJ KHANNA, 70, an Amritsar-born former judge of the Supreme Court came into prominence when he resigned from his post in protest against the appointment of Justice M.H. Baig as the chief justice of India in 1977. A former chief justice of Delhi High Court, Khanna earned the image of a crusader by his judicial pronouncements upholding civil and human rights. During the Emergency Khanna gave an adverse judgement striking down the various provisions of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA). Though he has never been a member of any political party, his known views have always been anti-Congress (I) and its leader Mrs Indira Gandhi. This fact has weighed heavily in his favour in the Opposition's nomination of his candidature against Giani Zail Singh for the presidential contest. Khanna spoke to Correspondent PRABHU CHAWLA on the issues involved in the election. Excerpts:

Q. The presidential election has assumed great significance. What are the main issues involved in this contest?

A. The position of the President has been well defined under the provisions of the Constitution. We have got a parliamentary system in which the President has to act in accordance with the advice of the council of ministers. Despite this, it is necessary for the President to project an image of impartiality and fairness. The kind of issues which are raised during the parliamentary elections are much wider because they concern policy matters. These questions can't be raised during the presidential election.

Khanna: sacrificial goat



Q. If there are no major issues involved then why should the Opposition put up a candidate at all?

A. I believe that despite the limited role of the President, he can make a positive contribution in many spheres. There is general degeneration of political life. People are losing faith in politicians. The President can arrest this trend by not involving himself in it directly.

Q. Do you believe that the President should accept the advice of the prime minister without questioning it?

A. I am against any confrontation between the President and the prime minister because that would not be good for the country. I believe that the provisions of the Constitution can be used in its letter and spirit. The President and the prime minister should work in harmony.

Q. Since the outcome of the poll is well-known, why have you agreed to become a sacrificial goat for the Opposition?

A. I believe that irrespective of the ultimate result, one has to value the wishes of nine major opposition parties. When such a large number of people pose their confidence in someone, one must respect their aspirations.

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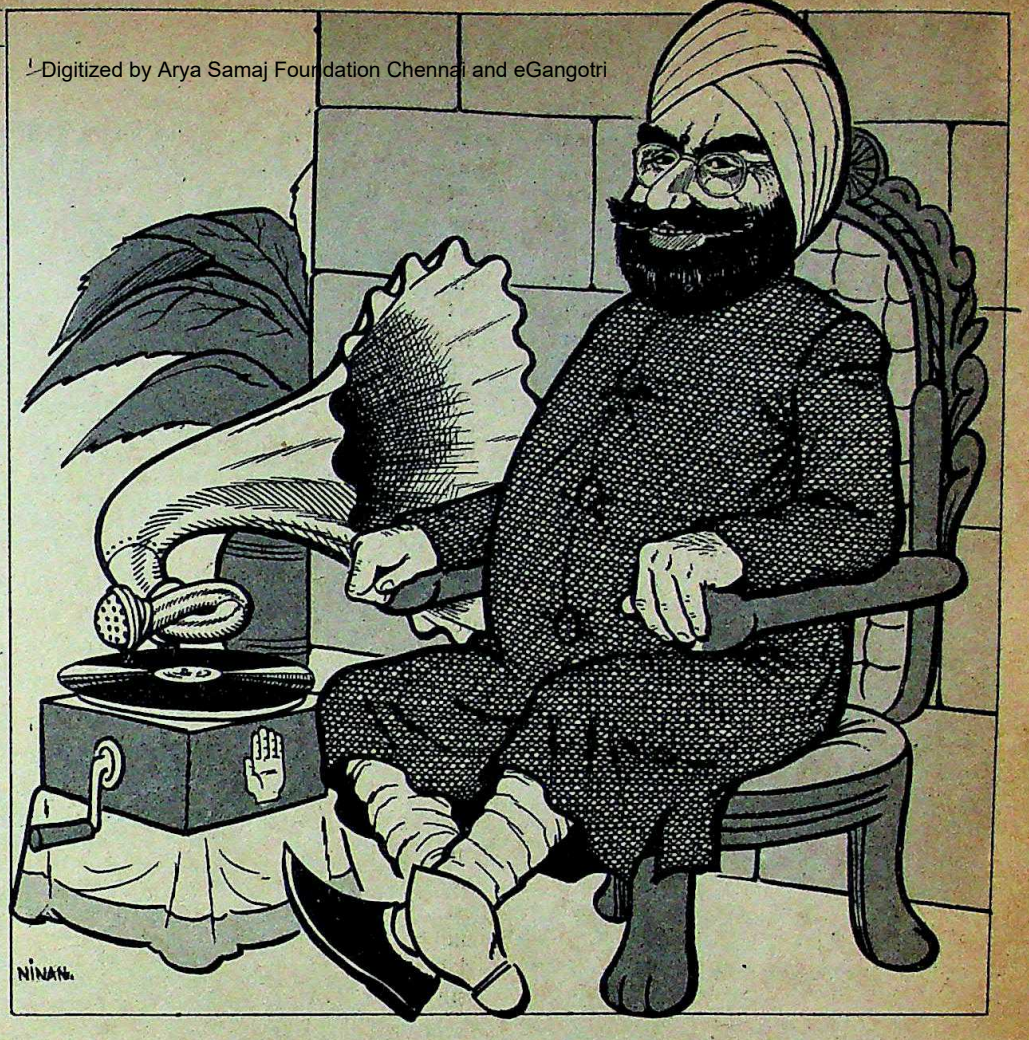
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began to find a replacement for
nobody was willing to play the
lumb. Both N.G. Goray, former
missioner to London, and Bhola
Shastri, former Rajya Sabha mem-
ected politely when approached, and
choice fell on H.R. Khanna. Even
's selection was not without oppo-
Jagjivan Ram, who was himself a po-
ndidate but backed out, expressed
proval at Khanna's public state-
the presidential contest was not
Khanna himself told INDIA TODAY
n against any confrontation be-
President and the prime minister".
Zail Singh virtually a certainty for
dentship considering the ruling pa-
mands 65 per cent of the necessary
Khanna is effectively putting on a
ce.

ework: Another indication of the
's unpreparedness was their ra-
pportune criticism of Zail Singh
ed in the Gurudev report. Though
have made effective capital of the
they done their homework, they
ckmated once again by Mrs
who pressurised Darbara Singh,
's arch political foe, into issuing a
hing statement. Darbara Singh's
statement said: "In spite of sus-
tch-hunting, harassing witnesses,
endettas, fabrication of facts and
of all principles of equity and na-
ce, the politically biased commis-
d not find a single case of malafide
Zail Singh. We have, therefore, re-
the report." With that facile vindi-
the Opposition's armoury was
ost.

s stands, Zail Singh should canter
ctly easily in this month's presiden-
Though it will be interesting to see if
ning takes place to exhibit any signi-
degree of dissent. He is, however,
o chances. Last week, he set off on
ry-wide barnstorming tour, teeth
g through his slicked-down beard,
present red rose in his buttonhole. It
s final tour before he moves bag
gage into the imposing Rashtrapati
n India's seventh President.
Singh is at his best, in an earthy
ment, tossing political banter around
gonies. Exchanging diplomatic ni-
with visiting heads of state and making
-flag forays into foreign climes is
not his cup of tea. For the first Sikh
apati Bhavan, the experience may
e he will cherish. But for the person
nstrated his new tenancy, that
ent in Rashtrapati Bhavan, Mrs
can now sleep a little easier at nights.

SUMAN DUBEY with PRABHU CHAWLA
and DILIP BOBB



PROFILE

Ever Upward

WHATEVER else he may lack, Giani Zail Singh, the 66-year-old former home minister and now contender for the Presidency, has rarely been known to lack self-expression. His earthy exuberance and often bumbling *bonhomie* have on occasion led him to exemplify the typical Sikh joke; and his combined foot-in-mouth utterances have given birth to a new phrase: "Zailisms".

Such Zailisms as may have caused his colleagues grave embarrassment —such as his recent adulatory speech about Hitler on the floor of the Lok Sabha—have at other times aroused genuine humour, so that those who speak of him as a court jester cannot help reserving a certain sneaking affection for his amiability. There is a degree of sincerity in his absurdity, so that the joke never sours. In fact, it takes off because of its inherent vanity, or self-deprecation, or simply because it is accompanied by great, back-slapping guffaws.

Humble Origins: Described at the time of his swearing-in as home minister on January 14, 1980, in his own "bio-sketch" as the "tall, handsome and immaculately dressed Giani", Zail Singh has frequently held forth on his own humble and impoverished origins as the son of a farmer in the Faridkot district of Punjab. He once mesmerised the Lok Sabha during a dull debate on jail reforms by diverting it with the story of how he came to be called "Zail". With characteristic *élan,* he informed the House that his name was originally Jarnail Singh. When years ago he was arrested for political activity and taken away to Lahore jail, the warder asked him what his name was. As a joke, he said "Jail Singh". The name stuck but, as Gianiji told his fellow MP's, by the time he was out of prison he was so enamoured of his own name that, by amending it slightly to "Zail", he decided to keep it for life.

Just as names, however silly, have a habit of sticking, so do images. And what no doubt amazes most people is the fact that a man labelled as a bit of a buffoon should now manage to waddle his way into the highest office in the land, into the very precincts of Rashtrapati Bhavan. For the

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The other 85% of our business is manufacturing a wide range of thermosetting plastics which are vital to Defence and just about any industry you can think of.

And without them the technological sophistication in some of the most important industries would not have been possible.

Take the electrical industry, for instance. Today, power generation and distribution would be unthinkable without industrial laminates, moulding materials and insulating varnishes as dependable insulators, like our Hylam, Hymold and Hyvar.

Take telecommunication. Hylam and Hymold are also essential for manufacturing telephones and telephone equipment.

And miniaturisation in the electronics industry would not have been possible without printed circuits. And printed circuits need copperclad laminates like our Hylam Copperclad.

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Our financial side is equally impressive.

The Company has paid a dividend consistently every year since Day 1.

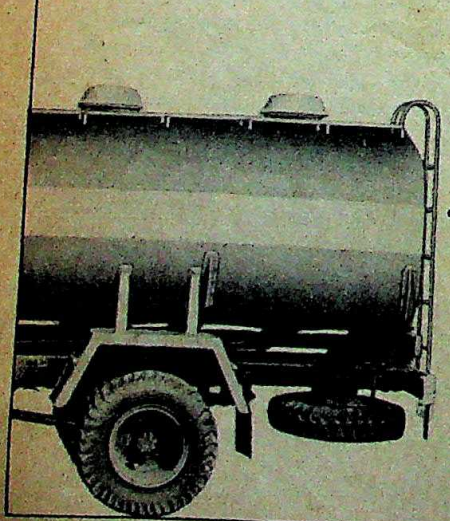
As many as four bonus issues have been declared in the last 12 years alone.

Which means, Rs. 50 invested in one share in 1969 is worth Rs. 1625 today.

Bakelite Hylam, you see, is the picture of a highly successful company.

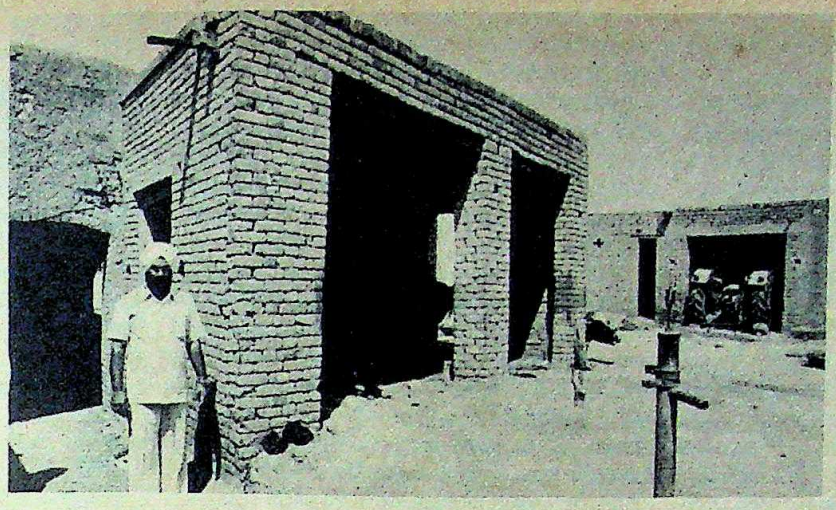
If you think we make only Decolam, you haven't even scratched the surface.

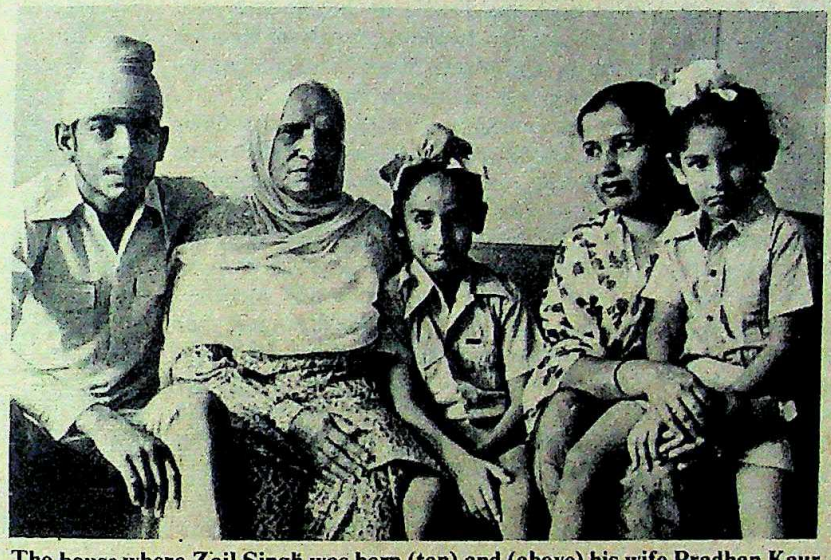
BAKELITE HYLAM



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BIKRAM SINGH

The house where Zail Singh was born (top) and (above) his wife Pradhan Kaur (second from left), daughter-in-law and grandchildren: humble beginnings

...ency is still associated, ...popular mind, with ...alities of unimpeach... ...partiality, restraint ...ity. Will Zail Singh, ...ing party's unani... ...ominee, fill the bill? ...il Singh may be a far ...from the great symbols ...the Indian Presidency ...by figures like Dr ...ra Prasad, Dr Rad... ...nan or Dr Zakir ...but his arrival in the ...t's chair indicates ...ged role of the Pre... ...(*see main story*). He ...dly partisan political ...whose presence as ...ent might be a special ...for the Sikhs, but is ...to elevate the role ...President to its origi... ...owed status. Instead, ...Zail Singh has to offer ...ching loyalty to the ...party and the party ...Mrs Gandhi who is ...me minister.

...voted Follower: "It is ...grace of God," the ...Giani muttered, ...broadly through ...-trimmed moustache ...eatly-tucked beard ...heard of his nomi... ...And the truth is that, ...ply devout man, Zail ...has never forgotten ...ots, be it the Granth, ...book of his religion from which he ...freely and often, or Sanjay and ...Gandhi whom he once called his *rah...*-saviour).

...onically, Zail Singh- alias Jarnail ...was ordained to teach the scriptures. ...May 5, 1916—he shares a birthday ...Karl Marx—in Sandhwan village in ...ict, he barely managed to get through ...riculation before deciding that he ...become a *granthi*—a professional ...of the holy Granth. His training to ...one earned him the title of Giani, ...g the "learned one".

...owever, his brand of politics origi... ...simultaneously with his religion, as a ...militant protest against the erstwhile ...of the princely state of Faridkot. Ins... ...the freedom movement, he challen... ...the maharaja of Faridkot by founding ...Congress Party in his domain. In 1938, ...was thrown into Faridkot jail, where he ...five years. He retains a clear memory ...time there. "It was an animal's exis... ...says the man who will be the last of a generation of Presidents to have participated in the freedom movement.

Powerful Links: It was at that early stage that Zail Singh established his links with Jawaharlal Nehru; establishing the Praja Mandal, and later a parallel government to that of the maharaja. He was often subject to severe humiliation and torture by police. Once the local police chief ordered that he be dragged through the streets of Faridkot with his hair tied to a jeep but, at the last minute, the drastic order was revoked.

With such credentials, it was natural that Giani would be elected to office in independent India; he was. From 1948 to 1952 he served as first revenue, then agriculture minister in the first Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) government. Soon after, he became president of the PEPSU Pradesh Congress Committee and, when PEPSU and Punjab state were merged into the single state of Punjab, Zail Singh found himself in the Rajya Sabha.

In 1962 he fought, and won, an election to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and was promptly included in Pratap Singh Kairon's Cabinet. Unfortunately, he was forced to quit when the Cabinet strength was reduced. Still, he has always cherished his relationship with Kairon whom he admires and often quotes as an example of a progressive and able chief minister.

Unflinching Loyalty: It is a notable trait in Zail Singh that he never in his entire political career switched loyalties or suffered a change of heart in moments adverse to the Congress Party; nor, for that matter, have his relationships with real political heavyweights, be it Sardar Patel, Indira Gandhi or Pratap Singh Kairon ever been threatened. On the contrary, his overflowing affability, good humour and fawning humility have helped him to ingratiate himself into the inner sanctums of power, in both Chandigarh and New Delhi.

It is also notable that the man's private life has never impinged upon his public one. His son still helps to farm the family's 57 acres held jointly by Zail Singh and his brothers back in Faridkot; the mud hut in which he was born still exists; his wife, a simple and conservative woman has seldom stepped out of the village; and his three daughters, two of them qualified doctors, rarely visit him though he keeps in constant touch.

News of the Giani's nomination to the nation's highest office was greeted with obvious jubilation in the dusty, sun-baked village of Sandhwan (population: 3,500)—5 km. from the former princely state of Faridkot—where he was born in a carpenter's family. Time hangs still in this remote village which boasts of a ramshackle railway station named after the illustrious son—Giani Zail Singh. Dayal Singh Parwana, 75, recounted his association with the Giani, who was his one-time pupil at the local gurudwara singing Sikh bhajans and kirtans. Says Parwana: "I know Gianiji very well. For 15 years he had been propagating that the Khalsa would rule under the *kesari* flag, until later he shifted to the Congress tricolour. It is good that he will be the President." Added 70-year-old Arjun Singh,

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a farmer: "Faith and dedication are two rare qualities of the Giani. And he has been richly awarded."

The only sour note came from Gurdev Singh, another farmer in his middle age. Said he: "It is good that Giani will be the President. But we cannot enjoy his patronage. He hardly did anything for the village." But the mood of jubilation was most conspicuous among the relations of the presidential candidate. Says Vasant Kaur, the Giani's 85-year-old aunt: "I know Giani is becoming President of the 'World'. There will be illumination in the village and we will distribute ladoos." Signs of elation were also evident in Giani's only son, 44-year-old Joginder Singh, who was unable to complete his schooling because of his father's preoccupation with politics. "The whole village is happy and I have been flooded with congratulations," says Joginder Singh, adding, "although he had less time for us. We have had enough love from him."

For a man who has shunned the constraints of domestic life and wholly given himself to politics, Zail Singh remains fastidious about some things. His dress, for instance. In personal appearance, he is almost always seen in a variety of *sherwanis*, of which he maintains a full wardrobe. And at least a dozen pairs of shoes which, along with a variety of subsidiary footwear, are lined lovingly along the base of his double bed.

Spartan Life-style: Apart from these few sartorial extravagances, his life-style remains fairly spartan. "What does a man want in life—I live only by the Guru's name and for the good of my people," says he, before diverting his interminable monologues to eulogies of Mrs Gandhi, the morality of the administrative service, troubles in Punjab or anything that catches his fancy.

For Zail Singh is never short on opinion, however startling they may be, or for that matter admissions about himself and his role. As chief minister of Punjab he once described himself as "the engine of a goods train dragging bogies on a sand track". And confessing to his imperfect hold over the English language he once candidly remarked: "I can speak telegraphic English. I conversed once with Kamaraj when no one else was around." But not all the jocularity can hide his canny ability to play ducks and drakes in politics, and the effusive show of affection—he is wont to greet the merest acquaintance with crushing bear-hugs—disguises shrewder motivations.

Zail Singh's first golden phase in politics—as chief minister of Punjab from 1972-77 though admittedly trouble-free for the state—was known for its populist manoeuvrings. He managed to keep the Akalis, as well as other religious hard-liners, at bay because he paraded his religious devotion more fiercely than the rest. He activated the Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, linked all the state's famous gurudwaras with a 400-km highway called Guru Gobind Singh Marg, rechristened a dozen state-run hospitals after the names of Sikh saints and went so far as to rename a small town outside Chandigarh after a son of Guru Gobind Singh.

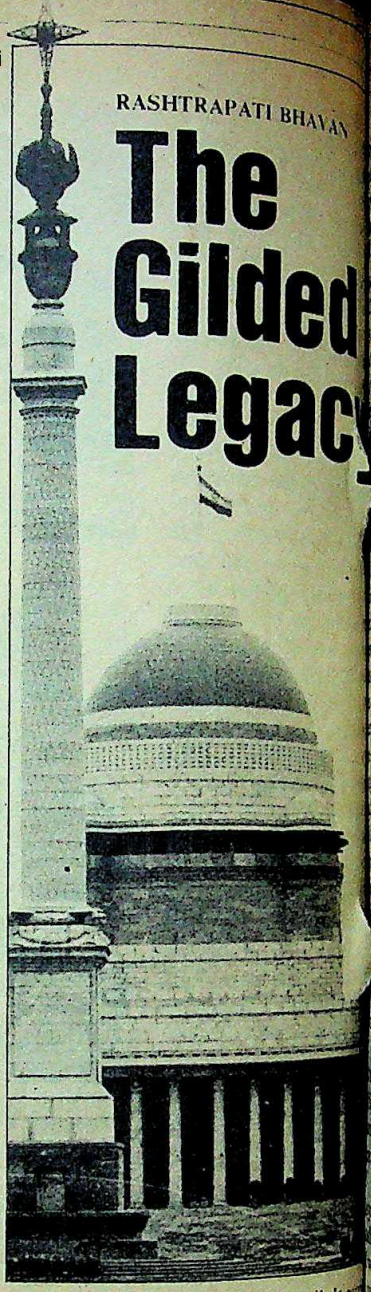
Covert Methods: And though he was by no means the most capable chief minister Punjab has had, his regime was strengthened by his equally fierce devotion to Sanjay Gandhi in the early days of the late leader's haul to the centre of power. As an administrator, Zail Singh demands the same loyalty that he has himself extended to his leaders. This he has achieved, both as chief minister of Punjab and Union home minister, in a covert manner. In the latter role he filled his ministry, sections of the police, and even the judiciary with his trusted men.

But nothing has been more obviously subversive to his image than his stormy relationship with Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh. No doubt Zail Singh considers Darbara Singh a poor and incompetent Congress(I) choice after his own tenure as the state's chief minister, but their unmitigated attempts at undermining each other's roles have shown up both leaders in bad light. In private conversation, Zail Singh is said to reserve some choice Punjabi phrases for the chief minister, especially his handling of growing secessionist forces in Punjab.

In retaliation some of the adverse propaganda from the opposing camp has stuck to Zail Singh. It was not so long ago, at the height of the agitations in Punjab, that his name cropped up along with the Dal Khalsa. Zail Singh has gone on record to suggest that the agitation flared up because of inept handling by the state Government—but if his known antagonism towards the chief minister is any indication, Zail Singh can be equally artful a manipulator in his attempts to dislodge a political rival.

As President, however, Zail Singh will have to rise above not only the smaller antagonisms of state politics, but all politics. At the same time he will be required to adhere to the Constitutional role as a truly national political arbiter. The Presidency, in that sense, is his greatest challenge. For a man of small beginnings, who has risen from grass roots politics to hold top positions in national politics, Zail Singh may not be expected to take an unbiased view but certainly a view large enough that keeps the national interest as its primary motive. Zail Singh may be the least literate President India has ever possessed but he is not lacking in perceptions of his own new role.

—SUNIL SETHI with GOVIND THUKRAL in Sandhwan



RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

The Gilded Legacy

IT IS not a bad job after all. It carries a Rs 10,000 salary—taxable though—and perks that dwarf the benefits of any giant-size American corporation. One of these perks, undoubtedly is that the President is entitled to a grandiose residence which is remarkable in many ways. Sir Edwin Lutyens, who designed the building, called Rashtrapati Bhavan, in the sunset glow of the Raj, hung a 250-kg Belgian chandelier in the centre of its glittering Darbar Hall. Since he called it the centre of Delhi. Since the inauguration of the building in 1929, it has been the centre of history as well. It has witnessed the historic transfer of power and the swearing-in of six successive presidents of the Republic of India.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan is by far the most magnificent building in which any Indian ruler—real or titular—ever lived. Its facades are made of the red and white

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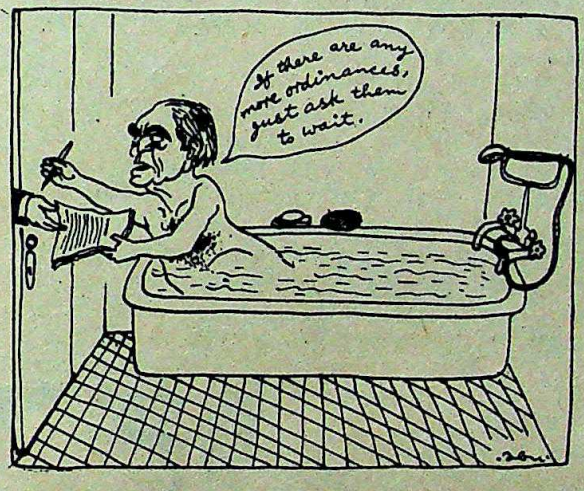
...ough, the building blocks of the ...ds whose monuments it had suc... Heavy, solemn and unabashedly ...al, its dome, columns and broad cou... an ideal fusion of the Greco-Roman, ...ictorian and the Indo-Saracenic. The ...ed building, work on which began in ...d could not be completed till 1929, ...-and-a-half miles of corridors, 340 ...and 37 salons. Its 5-acre plinth area is ...ded by 400 acres of rolling greens, ...te with a lush Moghul garden—a ...rboard of terraced emerald squares ...by blazing banks of flower.

...tive: The building's five blocks ...e state rooms, the secretariat of the ...t, the guest wing and the presiden... ...ly suite. The basement is a beehive of ...y. It has a huge kitchen, complete with ...ers, which can cook food for 1,000 ...It has a strong-room for guarding the ...f gold and silverware accumulated as ...er the decades. The ice factory in the ...ent can make two tonnes of ice at a ...Its two cinema theatres can seat 500 ...The laundry, equipped with washing ...ines installed by the Snowhite chain, ...s 8,000 pieces of clothes everyday. ...e dark and cool wine cellar was ...p the day Rajendra Prasad moved ...e Rashtrapati Bhavan as the first ...tionally elected President. However, ...ers, or wine-servers, still retain their ...and pay as survivors from the era of ...l bacchanalia.

...e Rashtrapati Bhavan functions like ...plete township—its 10,000 residents ...staff) protected in its fortress-like ...by a thousand security personnel. ...s a school inside for the children, a ...course (where Vice-President ...tullah is a permanent fixture), a ...court, a tennis court and a swimming ...which used to be visited, till a few years ...by Mrs Gandhi. There is even a barber's ...side. Said a resident: "Once you get ...is place you hardly ever have to go ...

...owever, the Indian presidents since ...ra Prasad, with the sole exception of ...ussain, a man fascinated by art and ...had very little use for the tremen... ...system of outdoor and indoor relief ...de in the building. They were mostly ...men of politics who gasped in the ...tage of the Rashtrapati Bhavan as ...remonially signed pieces of legis... ...hosted state banquets at the glitter... ...quet Hall, and parroted the lines the ...minister's office wanted them to say on ...al occasions. President Neelam Sanjiva ...for instance, shook his head in ...ed disbelief when celebrity painter ...ussain told him that one of his paint... ...ing at the Rashtrapati Bhavan within a few yards of Reddy's family suite. The President has apparently not noticed much of the Rs 2 crore-worth art objects (at Indian prices—estimated by the curator's office) in the building. In fact his own contribution to it is a garishly illuminated replica of the Tirupati temple kept at the entrance of his suite.

Careful Planning: The ceremonial occasions at the Rashtrapati Bhavan are legion. These are entrusted to the military secretary to the President as the President is also the supreme commander of the armed forces. He has under him a chief of protocol and a comptroller whose office distributes the budget for Rashtrapati Bhavan (Rs 99 lakh last year). The comptroller, Colonel Achuthan, is the kingpin of the household. He decides the menu for state banquets in collaboration with chief butler Bansi Lal (his speciality: Hyderabadi biryani); he orders the changing of bed linens, supply of liquor to guests in the privacy of their salons, and is even responsible for the maintenance of a dozen Polish horses in the presidential stable for drawing the ceremonial buggy.



Abu on President Ahmed during the Emergency

There is still another centre of power—the civil wing—which operates under the Secretary to the President, V.K. Rao, a retired ICS official who served as a chief secretary when Reddy was the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. It is the civil wing which receives draft bills from the various governments, sends these to the Union Home Ministry and gets them back to be finally put up to the President for his assent. Reddy, in his early days, often remarked that the Rashtrapati Bhavan was "no post office", and that the presidential secretariat did have the power to throw back improper legislations.

That was plain rhetoric. The 44th amendment to the Constitution empowers the President to refer back just once to the council of ministers a legislation which he does not consider to be proper. This applies to Central as well as state legislation. Since 1980, Reddy has not used even this limited power once. Even during the Janata and the Lok Dal period, the legistations that were referred back were done so on the grounds of bad drafting and never on the ground of constitutional propriety.

Ceremonial Function: Bereft of real power, a typical day in the President's life is really filled with meeting guests—and some paper work. He clears about 10 files each day, but he met nearly 10,000 guests in 1981. He meets them at the white and gold Morning Room, the teak-lined Panelled Room, the very English Yellow Drawing Room, and the book-lined Study Room—depending on the status and circumstances of the visitor. He hosts dinner for the visiting heads of the states and luncheons for heads of governments (it works the other way round for the prime minister). All state dinners and luncheons for foreign VIP's are held at the Banquet Hall and the External Affairs Ministry picks up the tabs. Liquor is not served except at the guest suites, and only Indian meals are served at the banquets.

The crowning jewel of the guest suites is the Dwarka Suite, reserved for heads of states, where an extra-long bed had to be ordered for the 6 ft 4 inch Gamal Abdul Nasser, the late president of Egypt. The other guest suites are furnished according to various styles of the Indian states and carry such evocative names as the Nalanda Room, the Mysore Room and even the Tagore Room. For at least six months in a year, there is a foreign guest almost every week, and the consequent flurry of activity in the basement section, a part of the building which is often referred to as the "engine room of the ship".

The Government of India printing press in the basement section churns out menu cards, and, most important of all, the "table plan" on the day of a banquet. A diagram of the seating arrangement, done strictly in accordance with protocol, is distributed to each guest in advance. The two heads of states—with the ladies to the left—sit first, the heads of governments after them, with ministers, MPs and secretaries in tow. The staff never fail to mention amusedly that there is always a distance of 20 feet separating Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi when they take their places at the 90 feet teak dining table.

Posh Transport: The presidential garage has a glittering array of foreign cars—a Buick, a Chevrolet, a couple of Mercedez-

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Benzes and a Rolls Royce which has been lying idle following engine trouble. There is a six-door Mercedes which is used only for a day in a year—when the President drives to the Parliament, a bare 100 yards away, to open its budget session. However, the army unit posted inside the Rashtrapati Bhavan maintains a stable of 130 horses for use as outriders during the President's ceremonial drive at the Republic Day parade. There is also a fleet of 40 Indian cars for use of the staff. Twenty people at the workshop keep the cars in use while the stable staff buy fodder worth Rs 500 a day for the horses.

There is an amazing variety of categories of employees at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. A 'tin-man' is in charge of enamelling work, a horde of 20 'silvermen and *masalchis*' keep the salvers and brassware in polish, 50 peons carry nearly 200 kg of mail in and out of the building every day, about 150 garden staff work the lawns and the Moghul Garden, 12 cooks manage the kitchen and a battery of electricians and mechanics keep the 130 big and sma deliers aglow.

The President himself has, howe four big rooms at his personal dispo maintenance of which is done entirel Central Public Works Department which looks after the general mainte the building. His daily food is cooke private kitchen, and he receives his p guests in his suite. Even the prime m met at the Study Room not in the fa

The atmosphere at the Ras

PAST PRESIDENTS

Waning Power

THE OFFICE of the President is a glamorous edifice but with a timorous reserve of real power. Over the years, however, the glamour of the edifice and the reality of the power have both suffered.

Rajendra Prasad, the only President who served two five-year terms between 1952 and 1962, had consistent political differences with the late Jawaharlal Nehru. He dithered for a year before giving his assent to the Hindu Code Bill, the revolutionary enactment which went many steps ahead of its times in changing the Hindu way of life, including legalising divorce. He disapproved of Nehru's friendliness towards China as early as the mid-'50s, and would have contested despite Nehru's opposition for a third term in 1962 had his failing health not stood in the way.

Flexible: Nehru, the country's first prime minister, who once said "we did not make the President a mere figurehead", persisted in treating Rajendra Prasad exactly as one. In fact, in 1960, when Prasad publicly called for a thorough examination of the role of the President, Nehru went so far as to prevent his speech from being widely circulated. But even so, Nehru was flexible enough when it came to the question of selecting a President. In 1952, Nehru's choice was C. Rajagopalachari but he gave in to pressure from his peers who preferred Prasad.

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the next president (1962-67), had excellent rapport with Nehru during his earlier five-year tenure as vice-president. Though a philosopher of international repute, his subsequent differences with Nehru were far from philosophical. As the Sino-Indian border war broke out soon after his appointment, he rushed to Tezpur, in the eastern sector, and told the jawans: "We were living in a dream world. Now we are waking up to the realities."

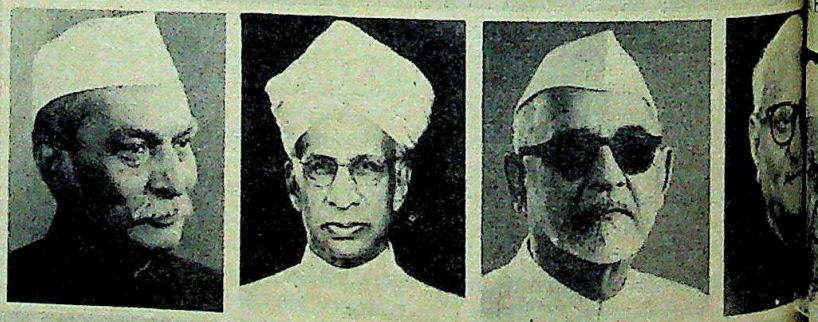
However, most of the wide-ranging changes in the country's political fortunes, including two wars with neighbouring countries and two transitions at the prime minister's house, came about during Radhakrishnan's tenure. He undoubtedly made use of his colossal stature in influencing decisions in a way that his constitutional authority would not have permitted. But Nehru was just as flexible with him as with Prasad: only the personal relationship between the two men cooled off as a result of their divergence of views.

Turning Point: In 1967, Zakir Hussain moved into the Rashtrapati Bhavan when the Congress Party, for the first time in the history of independent India, was under the shadow of defeat and degeneration. Hussain's appointment at that moment was a minor watershed for the Presidency. Gone were the days when the opposition leaders liked to meet the President to air the smallest of grievances, and the office of the President was regarded as non-partisan and cutting across political lines.

Varahagiri Venkatagiri Giri, who earned his passage into the Rashtrapati Bhavan on the now-famous "conscience vote", was a man fond of bluster. Said one of his former aides: "Whenever Mrs Gandhi came to see him, he would make sure that his voice could be heard from outside the closed Study Room. His one pet phrase reserved for Mrs Gandhi was: 'I'm an independent President, not party President." Yet it is Giri wh capitulated each time Mrs Gandhi a plied the tiniest pressure. In 1970, ordered the dismissal of the Charan Sin ministry in Uttar Pradesh; again durin visit to Kiev in Russia, he simply put signature on the paper sent to him by M Gandhi through a courier, without car to ask any questions. In 1971, it was G who wrote to Mrs Gandhi to dissolve Parliament because he felt that the "ti was right".

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, who rode presidency in 1974 and died in harness 1977, was the first Cabinet minister t promoted to the highest office of the lan A Congressman from head to toe, Ahmed endorsed the Emergency proclamatio without demur, though he is believed have suffered twinges of conscience lat

Unambiguous Provision: On June 1975, Mrs Gandhi had two meetings w him in which he was virtually asked



(From left) Rajendra Prasad, Radhakrishnan, Zakir Hu

sign on the dotted line of the Emergen proclamation. Ahmed did not go into t obvious fact that the decision was preceded by any Cabinet meeting and such, his action might be construed unconstitutional. Article 74 (1) of Constitution clearly lays down "there shall be a council of ministers w the prime minister at its head" to aid advise the President.

Following Ahmed's death, and collapse of the Congress, Neelam San

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is ponderous, bureaucratic but never
The army of ADC's, secretaries, deputy
ries and assorted babus of the build-
just as cockily pompous as the
attendants and the showily-dressed
rs of the presidential brass band, but
exude a sense of relaxed self-
ence, basking in the sun of authority
merely on paper. They brim with
tes about VIPs, and stay close to
without really being in it.

moved in as the first consensus
ate. It was, however, a dubious
ess, because the Congress was re-
ed by Y.B. Chavan, the leader of
liamentary party, who always had
spot for Reddy. Mrs Gandhi tried
up Hidayatullah as the rival can-
but could not carry her party

ere was no love lost between
Desai, then prime minister, and
One of his first acts as the
t was to write to Desai complain-
out the activities of his son,
hai Desai, and his principal sec-
Y. Shankar. In 1979, as the crunch
ith the resignation of the Desai
, Reddy invited Chavan to form
vernment instead of asking
Ram, the newly-elected leader of
gest party, the Janata Party, to
is majority. When Chavan failed,
t Charan Singh to form a govern-
However, before long, Singh lost



Reddy: the glory dims

jority as Mrs Gandhi withdrew her
n from the ministry. Reddy then
ed his power under the rarely used
eeping provisions of Article 85(2)
Constitution to dissolve the Parlia-
and call for fresh elections. By a
of history, the same man who was
presidency by Mrs Gandhi in 1969
to play the undertaker to her main
y, the Janata Party.

—SUMIT MITRA

SANJIVA REDDY

Ready To Retire

WHEN 69-year-old Neelam Sanjiva Reddy retires as President of India on July 24 and returns to his home town, Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh, the reception he will get, unlike that of the Bibical prodigal son, is probably going to be lukewarm. For although Anantapur district is where Reddy was born, in the tiny hamlet of Illuru, it has never quite been his political backyard. In a career spanning 40 years he has stood from Anantapur several times and lost more than once. In the 1977 parliamentary elections he was forced to stand from the neighbouring Nandyal constituency in Kurnool district where he became the only candidate of the undivided Janata Party to win in the state.

But despite Anantapur's step-motherly treatment, Reddy will be back here in his twilight years to live in the three-bedroomed house that has been constructed already. Situated on a small hillock the two-acre plot overlooks Anantapur town and is only 30 km from Reddy's ancestral house in Illuru. Naga Vihar, as he has named his home after seeing a cobra in it during construction, will be a far cry from New Delhi's resplendent Rashtrapati Bhavan. The apple-green house, which cost an estimated Rs 2 lakh, has a special underground hall to store Reddy's collection of momentoes and photographs.

In the same compound is Reddy's old house which he gifted to his 37-year-old son, Sudhir. Unlike his father, Sudhir, a US-educated surgeon, has kept away from politics and has opened a nursing home in the heart of Anantapur town. Reddy's three daughters are married and live outside the district; but while the President is not tending to his seven-acre farm in Illuru he hopes to spend time with his 13 grandchildren who visit him frequently.



RAJ CHENGAPPA

Reddy's home in Illuru: lukewarm reception

Drought Prone: When Reddy settles down in his home town he will become just one of the 4.51 lakh cultivators in the district which has a population of 26.18 lakhs. The district's only distinction is that being 19,130 sq km makes it the largest in the state but as it falls in a rain shadow area it is chronically drought prone.

Hardly 15 per cent of Anantapur's total cultivable area of 30 lakh acres is irrigated, the main source being the Tungabhadra river canal which starts from neighbouring Karnataka. The three rivers that bisect it, the Chitravati, the Pennar and the Hagari, do not have enough flow to make the land fertile. Paddy, jowar and groundnut are the main crops grown and prosperity has rarely smiled on Anantapur and it remains a sleepy, backward district despite Reddy becoming the first chief minister of Andhra Pradesh and later on President of India.

If the people of Anantapur do not have smiles of welcome for Reddy it is his inability to improve the conditions of the district that is the prime reason. Be it a government officer belonging to his caste or a lawyer who attends the staid district court or even a railway collector in the tiny station, the reaction is similar: "Reddy has never helped us. He has only helped himself."

Intense Dislike: The feeling of dislike is so intense that Reddy was defeated by his own brother-in-law, the famous communist leader Tarimela Nagi Reddy, in the 1952 parliamentary elections in Anantapur constituency. Already dumped by Indira Gandhi when she supported V.V. Giri for the Presidency, a move that caused the famous 1969 Congress split, a bitter Reddy went back to his farm in Illuru and remained in the political wilderness till he became active again during the Emergency.

In his ancestral house Reddy's favourite olive green rocking chair awaits his return. Peering down at it are two of his favourite photographs: one showing a young Reddy with his mentor Tanguturi Prakasam, the first chief minister of composite Madras state and the other of Jawaharlal Nehru posing with his entire family. When he was once asked what he had done for Anantapur district Reddy angrily shot back: "What has Anantapur done for me?"

—RAJ CHENGAPPA in Anantapur

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Blitzkrieg In Lebanon



MENACHEM Begin's blitzkrieg in Lebanon last fortnight shattered not only the PLO's military organisation but also several myths which the Jewish state had perpetrated in order to gain purchase on world sympathy. Despite its previous success in military conflicts with Arab states Israel had promoted the image of itself as a small, desperate and beleaguered entity cowering before crushing military threats from its Arab neighbours and the PLO in Lebanon. But the Lebanon invasion has clearly demonstrated that Jerusalem sets the agenda for the Middle East at will. The supremacy of the Israel military machine—the ease with which it demolished PLO and Syrian forces—is awesome, and beyond challenge.

And in its easy victory over the Palestinians in Lebanon, Israel undercut and revealed the hollowness of its own argument that it did not negotiate with the PLO because PLO forces in Lebanon constituted a mortal threat to the state of Israel. A mortal threat is hardly a mortal threat when you can crush it in two days.

What also became nakedly apparent during the course of the last two weeks were the double standards of the US Government and the press. Both displayed an initial complicity in the Israeli invasion. American newspapers cheerleading the Israeli attack—"Beirut 15 Miles" screamed a headline in the *New York Post* as Israel's columns approached the Lebanese capital—lauded Israel's motives and early objective of clearing out PLO artillery from within shelling range of Israel.

A day after President Reagan had told an enthusiastic British Parliament that armed aggression should never be condoned, Begin's generals had begun their assault into Lebanon. Even as Reagan's special Middle East envoy Philip Habib was on his way to the region to urge restraint, Israeli war-planes were devastating PLO refugee settlements and Beirut with savage and indiscriminate bombing. And Begin, cavalierly and rudely dismissed two urgent messages from Reagan calling for a cease-fire. Days later the United States would reward this snub from the intransigent Begin by vetoing a Security Council resolution calling for sanctions against Israel if it did not desist from its gratuitous carnage.

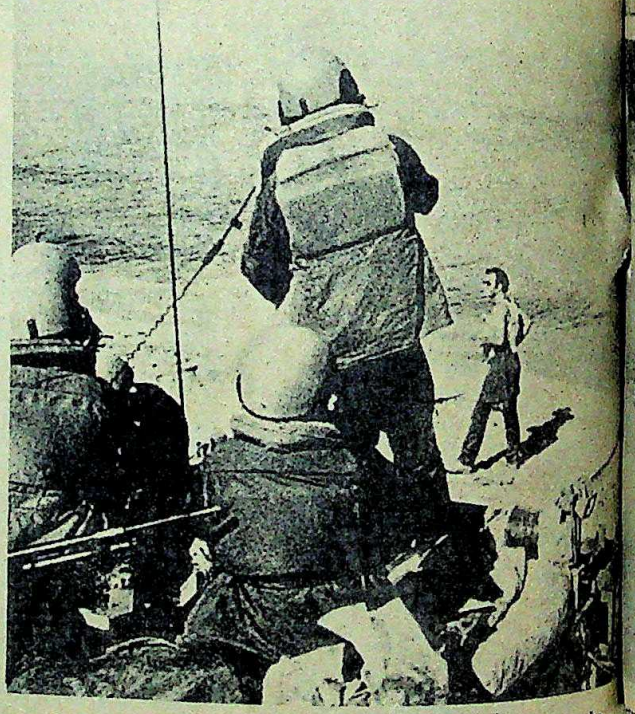
Devastation: As the reality of Israel's terrorist bombings and devastation of civilian population centres began to dawn on the world, some of the pro-Israel jingoism in the US began to die down. Anywhere between 10,000 and 40,000 civilians including women and children have been killed and 700,000 wounded. The 40,000 figure has been quoted by an ad hoc committee "in defence of the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples" which recently bought a full-page ad in the *New York Times* to condemn Israel's aggression.

A PLO spokesman in New York told INDIA TODAY in an interview that Israeli soldiers were separating Palestinians from other members of the Lebanese civilian population by requiring them to mark the back of their clothes with white crosses. "How can they have forgotten the yellow stars they were once made to wear by the Nazis?" one observer asked. And Israeli forces, the spokesman said, are preventing humanitarian aid such as infant milk formula from reaching Beirut.

Even the pro-Israel *Washington Post* admitted in a belated editorial that "so few people anywhere have mourned the thousands of civilians, Palestinians and Lebanese killed". The editorial said that Israel has fired on hospitals, ousted Palestinian doctors from medical facilities and "denied PLO soldiers the formal protections of the Geneva convention prisoners of war code.". But the *Post*'s conclusion to that editorial was startling beyond belief. It went on to condemn, not the Israeli attack, but PLO leader Y... Arafat for having "led his movement and people to disaster".

Successful: Within the Reagan Administration the voice... dissent were few and far between. Defence Secretary C... Weinberger is the only prominent cabinet member who ... suggested a strong public rebuke to Israel. But mostly, there ... been private gloating at the Israeli success because, after all, ... Israelis have militarily wiped out a Soviet-supported force in t... Middle East, because the Israeli success has, in the words of Isra... and American statesmen, opened up a window of opportunity ... new American initiatives and influence in the region.

While Israel's made-in-America war machine including ... awesome F-15 and F-16 fighters, wrought havoc on the PLO and ... limited engagements, on Syrian forces, the PLO's supporters w... paralysed into inaction for a variety of reasons. Most Arab st...



Israeli commandos landing in Sidon: talking with bombs

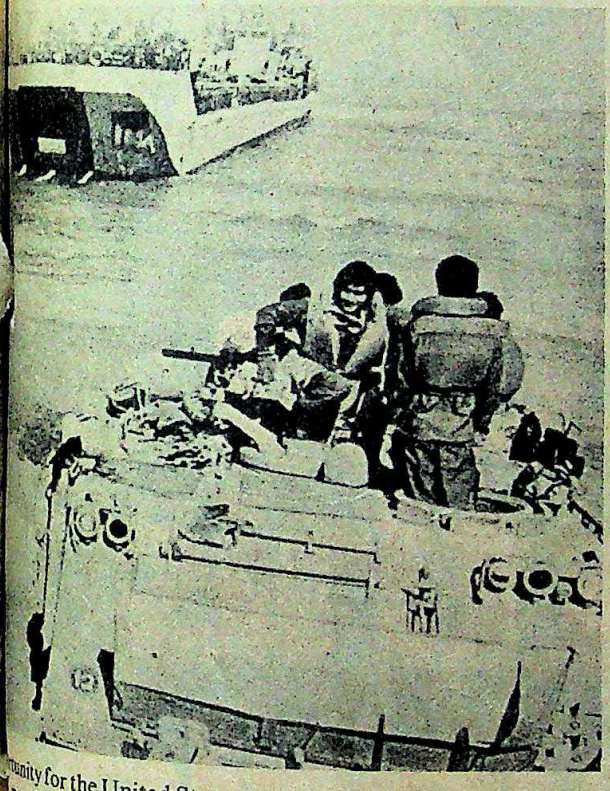
are ambivalent about the PLO and consider the organisation ... nuisance that must be supported to prevent it from becoming ... threat to their own regimes.

The Jordanians who butchered tens of thousands ... Palestinians over a decade ago and drove most of them ... Lebanon in the first place, want to avoid engagement with Israel ... all costs. The Syrians, who've cut their own little private deals ... Israel in the past, are hardly the champions of the PLO. It ... important to remember that Syrian forces moved into Lebanon ... 1976—with secret American backing to prevent a PLO victo... against the Lebanese Christians and indigenous Muslims. T... Iranians are still to obsessed with their own little war to pay m... heed to Lebanon. And the Saudis—who back the PLO financ... distrust the Alawite minority regime in Syria and who, in fo... US secretary of State Haig's words, are America's prim...

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observators in the region—sat on their triple fence.
But what of the Soviets? The big bear in the North emitted its
Israeli growls to only after Israel's victory was certain. But
were more grunts than growls, leading many observers to
clude that the Soviets have a quiet understanding with the US in
Middle East. But that can hardly be the case. The Israeli
sion caught the Soviets at a bad time and revealed the Soviet
's contradictions in its dealings with the Middle East.
Dilemma: The Soviets have never quite been able to resolve the
ma of the Syrian-PLO-Soviet triangle. The Syrians, after all,
Lebanon to keep the PLO under control. The PLO resents the
. The PLO's main big-power ally is the Soviet Union. So is it
But the Syrians are not entirely averse to PLO defeat because
ld help them hang on to a chunk of PLO-free Lebanon to
mpensate for the loss of the Golan Heights. Besides, as reported
earlier column on Lebanon in INDIA TODAY (March 31), the
s have also secretly been negotiating with Lebanon's
nite Christians for concessions and have told Maronite
ers that the PLO is not their only friend in the region.
So all this, according to some US analysts, adds up to a golden



portunity for the United States to remake Lebanon in such a way
provide for American influence and Israeli security. And
forces are apparently determined to stay on until Israel gets
. Several scenarios on putting Lebanon back together again
being discussed.
One calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces including the
and Syria and shaping a strong national government, including
Lebanese factions and warlords under the presidentship of
nite Christian leader Bashir Gamayel. Another calls for
posing Lebanon between the Christians, the Syrians, the
ugnous Muslims and Israel and dispersing the PLO in pockets in
Lebanon.
True the PLO was a foreign force in Lebanon. As were the
True, no state can exist as a viable entity with conclaves of
armies in its midst. But the solutions being offered are
ably doomed to failure because they incorporate a central
present in the Camp David accords: Israel's stubborn refusal to negotiate with the Palestinians.

Viewed in the light of last fortnight's events, the PLO has, undoubtedly, been militarily humbled. But the long range political clout of the PLO is far from broken. The only way that can be achieved is to annihilate the Palestinians, all four million of them who live all over the Arab world. The solution to the problem lies not in remaking Lebanon but in the West Bank and Gaza where the Israelis rule militarily over 1.5 million Palestinians. The Palestinians who are in Lebanon are there because they have nowhere else to go. Given a choice they would prefer to go and live in their former homes in Gaza and the West Bank from where they were booted out by the Israelis. But the Israelis do not permit them to return. For them to do so would mean an admission by Israel of the *de facto* existence of a Palestinian state on its borders.

Bold Initiatives: The Palestinians are not lemmings. They have no suicidal desire to go jump into the sea. They have nowhere to go but into a new homeland. In denying them that, and in trying to alter the map of the Middle East through military means, the Israelis have made the Palestinians the new Jews of the world. And the consequences will reverberate ominously through every Muslim capital in the region.

The Americans have not made a single positive or politically constructive move in the Middle East in 16 months. Israel has been in charge. Its invasion of Lebanon tells the Arab world that the US not only underwrites Israel's security. The irony is that the Lebanese crisis is an opportunity to take bold initiatives. These initiatives, whatever they are, will come at a time of dwindling US credibility in the region unless America faces the problem of a Palestinian homeland head on.

In a sense, the Israeli invasion was the first time that Israel talked to the PLO directly, albeit with bombs. It was the first PLO-Israeli bilateral war. And peace accords can only come when Israel agrees to talk to the PLO. Several important governments are already realising this. France's Mitterrand, the most pro-Israel French leader in decades, is now openly calling for the creation of a Palestinian state. *The Times* of London also advocated the creation of a Palestinian state west of Jordan.

Meanwhile Egypt's Hosni Mubarak who has respected the Camp David accords signed by Anwar Sadat has been badly embarrassed by the Israeli invasion. There have been several demonstrations at Cairo's Al Azhar Mosque against the Camp David accords. And Mubarak is likely to be pressured into a more hostile stance against his Camp David partners—Israel and the US. The beginning of this was apparent last fortnight when Mubarak visited Riyadh to mourn the death of King Khalid. He stayed on for several days and then issued a scathing denunciation of Israel from the Saudi capital.

Observers predict that as Egypt becomes more aloof from Israel and the US, Mubarak would resume his country's traditional role of leadership in the Arab world. Already, the PLO has been using Mubarak to convey messages to the Israelis. And as time goes on, the PLO will begin to depend on more aid from Egypt as the champion of the Palestine cause.

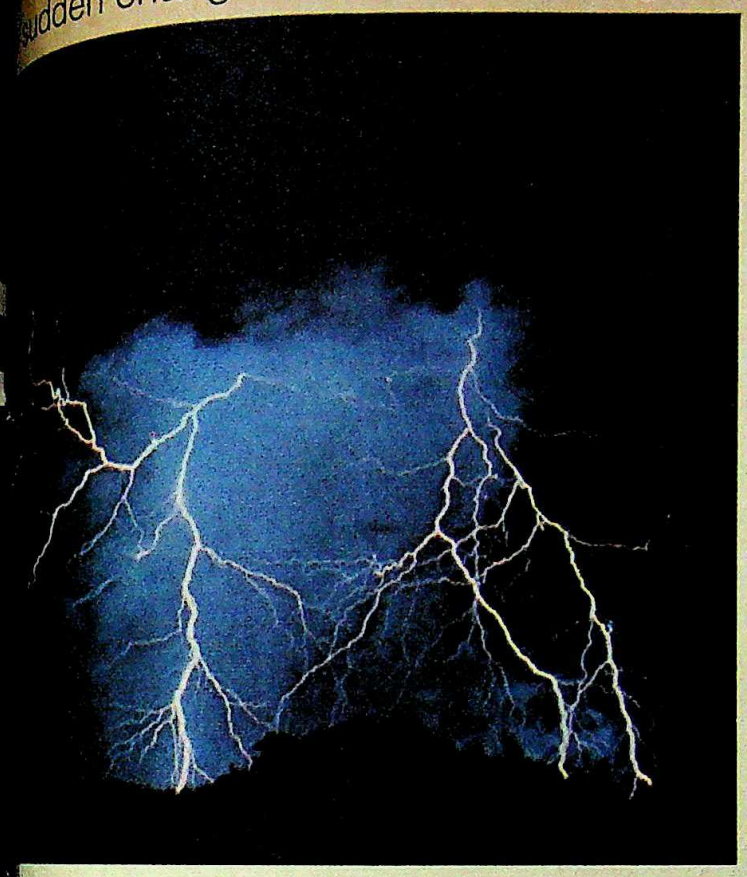
Accordingly many analysts believe, that, divested of broad political support, the PLO would once again revert to ad hoc terrorist attacks against enemies all across the world. Strangely enough, this kind of anarchic, nihilistic political action, born naturally out of desperation, might suit Israel for the time being. It was not in Israel's interests to see the growth of a moderate, reasonable, and politically viable PLO. Israel's major public relations gimmick around the world was to paint the PLO as an organisation of fanatical desperadoes and terrorists. It was not in Israel's interest to see a large part of the world regard Yasser Arafat as a moderate leader yet nobody has emerged more of an extremist in last fortnight's fighting than the state of Israel.

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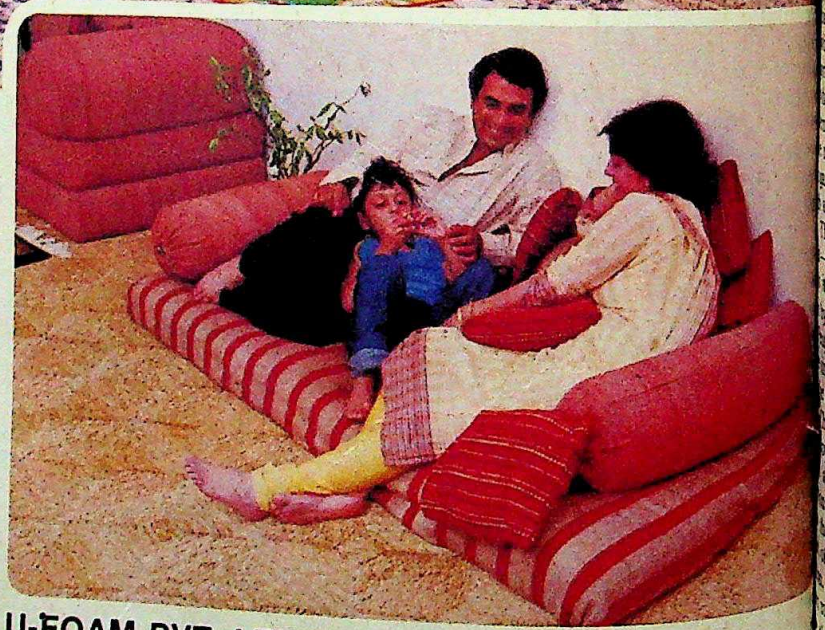
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...RITIUS

...unge To The Left

...HE VICTORY was unprecedented. For the first time in Mauritius an ...liance of leftist parties swept the ...o capture all 62 National Assembly ...ats brought to an end the 23-year ...ance of 82-year-old Sir Seewoosagur ...oolam. The election of June 11 was ...nt in global terms as well—a leftist ...cent in the Indian Ocean would ...rably change the political face of that ...e area.

...he electorate had been offered a clear-...ice: continuity or change. The first ...epresented by Ramgoolam's Labour ...ed its allies, the Rassemblement du ...est Liberte (RPL), the Parti Mauricien ...nd 31 smaller parties. This alliance was ...ed by many within the Labour Party. ...rive for change was led by Paul ..., 37, Annerood Jugnauth, 52, and ...Boodhoo, 37, who came together in ...ance of Berenger's leftist Mouvement ...st Mauricien (MMM) and Boodhoo's ...cialiste Mauricien (PSM).

...gry Verdict: The overwhelming vic-...the MMM-PSM alliance (who won 42 ... seats respectively) was seen as an ...erdict on the Ramgoolam adminis-...which had arrogantly ignored the ...g demands for social justice and equal ...rtunities. Said a voter: "We don't know ...ther the MMM-PSM will give us a better ...rnment but what we know is that we ...ded our votes to oust corrupt and ...nt people from power and that's en-...isfaction."

...The results confounded all predic-...—the leftist alliance won all the 60 ...t contested, the remaining two were ...by an affiliated party, the Organisation ...gle Rodriguais (OPR). And for the first ...since 1968 the eight best loser seats will ...allocated.

...he reasons for the disenchantment of ...opulace with Ramgoolam's govern-...are not hard to find. Nearly every ...n felt itself alienated:

...the Hindus, who make up nearly 52 per ...of the approximately 1 million popu-...felt that too many concessions had ...made to the minorities at their expense;

...the youth reacted against the worsening ...ployment situation (reports put unem-...ment at well over 10 per cent) and the ...ing nepotism and favouritism;

...the working class was exasperated by ...sive measures such as the Industrial ...ations Act (IRA) which curtailed their ...ts;

► the civil service was incensed by the delay in the publication of the report of the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) which would considerably revise their salaries; and

► just about everybody was upset about the Government's inability to curb inflation which had hit 42 per cent.

In the face of this grim scenario Ramgoolam's tactics of arousing communal feelings, making last minute concessions to the populace and baiting the Opposition were doomed. Even the retaining at high cost of the services of the Americans, Eric Ekvall and Joseph Napolitan, both experts in electoral strategy was futile. In a bid for popularity he created 8,000 jobs for those known as hardship cases and also introduced unemployment benefits.

Buying time on television, he launched a campaign branding the MMM-PSM leaders as political adventurers who would plunge the country into chaos and compared them with the more ruthless regimes of the communist bloc. The octogenarian leader also circulated documents alleging a tie-up between the leftists and Libya insinuating that the former had promised to support Libyan revolutionary activities in Africa in return for help during the elections.



Ramgoolam (left) and Berenger: overwhelming vote for change

This last step recoiled on Ramgoolam as it cost him the Muslim vote (approximately 16 per cent of the population) while the rest dismissed it as propaganda. The results did not, however, cause the former prime minister to retrace his steps and he declared that the people, in particular the youth had fallen prey to the brainwashing techniques of the MMM-PSM alliance.

Deciding Factor: An analysis of the results of the elections, which are held on a one-man-three-votes basis, shows that the youth were the deciding factor. Of the 90 per cent of the 530,000 strong electorate, 60 per cent voted for the leftist combine. Eighty per cent of this group was in the 18 to 35 age bracket. Commenting on the results, Berenger, secretary-general of the MMM, said: "The results of the general election prove that communalism is dead. A new Mauritius is born and with it has emerged a new society."

The leftist alliance has already decided on the allocation of portfolios. Jugnauth, a Hindu lawyer, has been chosen prime minister. Boodhoo, a former teacher is deputy prime minister and minister of information and of cooperatives and Jean Claude L'Estract, 34, a journalist, is minister for foreign affairs. Berenger, a former trade unionist who is the real power in the Government, is the minister for finance.

On the economic front the new Government plans sweeping changes. They propose to nationalise two out of the 20 sugar factories on the island along with 2,000 acres of land. Also up for nationalisation are public transport and Air Mauritius and some of the big hotels. Although the Government will seek aid from both power blocs it will maintain privileged relations with France and India.

Continuity Promised: The new Government has, however, promised continuity in the sphere of foreign affairs and has publicly supported the non-aligned path. Reports indicate though that they will move closer to the Seychelles, Madagascar, USSR and Libya. They have announced that they will be attending the summit meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) of which Mauritius is already a member and have recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO).

Of particular interest to India is the Mauritian Government's stand on the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. They have declared that they will continue to work in concert with India to demilitarise the Indian Ocean. Plans are apparently afoot to launch a diplomatic offensive with the aid of India to regain Diego Garcia where the US has set up a military base. They have also declared an interest in staking a claim on the Chagos archipelago. north of Mauritius. Aware that these plans will not meet with Washington's approval, Jugnauth said: "Never mind, we shall struggle to get back our territories."

He also emphasised Mauritius' special relationship with India saying: "We have a lot to learn from India in the field of agriculture and cottage industries." Jugnauth also said that his first trip abroad would be to India. It appears that though the Government is ready to use a new broom at home they are more hesitant about trying out new policies abroad.

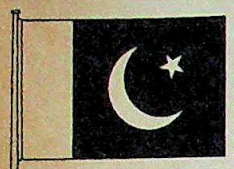
—TEKLALL GUNESH in Port Louis

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PAKISTAN

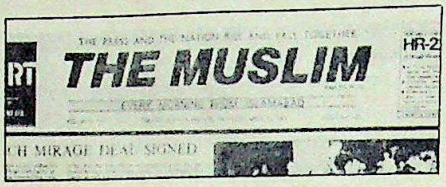
Shahi's Last Stand

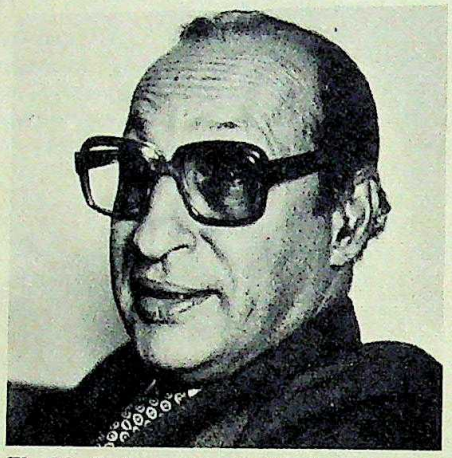


THE MUSLIM, an Islamabad daily, has a high-sounding slogan emblazoned across its mast-head. It reads: "The press and the nation rise and fall together." But one man who might strongly object to the legitimacy of that slogan is former Pakistan foreign minister, Agha Shahi. Barely days after Shahi, the bespectacled arch-diplomat, stepped down earlier this year as foreign minister on grounds of ill health, *The Muslim* carried a laudatory editorial entitled "Well played Shahi".

The editorial, however, struck a rather jarring note when it referred to Shahi as "America's Man", a snide and clearly uncalled for reference to his pivotal role in the recent defence agreement with the Reagan Administration. Shahi, who intended to fade gracefully out of the Pakistan scene, found himself back in the headlines when he sued *The Muslim* for damages amounting to Rs 1 crore.

In his suit, which will come up for hearing in August before the Sind High Court, Shahi charged that *The Muslim*'s remark was totally unfounded, baseless, defamatory and libellous in nature and had damaged his name, standing and reputation both in Pakistan and abroad and is likely to continue to cause him harm and loss of reputation.





The Muslim's mast-head (above) and Shahi: history will be the judge

Public Interest: Since then, the case has aroused great interest in Pakistan and hundreds of letters have appeared in various newspapers, including *The Muslim*. Inexplicably *The Muslim*, has replied to ... letter apologising for the "misunde... ing" but so far has failed to do the sam... as Shahi himself is concerned. Inste... paper carried a front page piece un... headline: "Lawyers offer their serv... *Muslim*" which stated that lawyers ... Lahore High Court and the Supreme ... after going through the editorial in q... had found nothing objectionable and ... the opinion that it had "removed d... the minds of certain quarters".

This only added fuel to the fi... Shahi maintaining that the article was ... reiteration of the earlier editorial and ... further damaged his reputation and ... ing. Barely days earlier, *The Musl...* printed a reply to an irate letter in wh... author, Abdul Basit Khan, had sup... Shahi. *The Muslim* reply stated: "... anguished if anything we said abo... Shahi should have caused reader Kha... distress. We hasten to assure him th... respect and affection for Mr Shahi is ... than his own."

Shahi maintains that in the garb ... reply, the newspaper regretted their ... ment to Khan but failed to retract ... allegation against him. While Islam... buzzes with anticipation about when th... will come up for hearing, Shahi's str... defence remains the evidence of his ... career. In fact, Shahi's suit goes into a ... history of his performance as a pub... vant spanning 36 years, starting wi... various ambassadorships and his st... permanent representative to the UN ... 1967 to 1977. In 1977, he was appo...

FILMS

The Siren Song

DIPLOMATIC wrangles have never curbed the appetite for Indian movies in Pakistan. Bombay's products have always had the right ingredients to command a vast audience in this country. It has always been the Government which has blocked the screening of Indian movies on the plea that Pakistan's fledgling movie industry needed a protected market if it was to prosper. But now the Government is finding that the phenomenal growth of the video industry is shooting huge holes in its policies.

Estimates have it that every tenth house in Karachi has a video cassette recorder (VCR) and families all over the city watch Indian movies every night. Some films are available even before their official premieres in India.

Relaxation: Officially the government is still sticking to its policy of not allowing the screening of Indian movies. In practice, it has relaxed its views considerably. At one time people who screened Indian movies faced the threat of arrest under the Cinematograph Act. The Government has decided that it might as well close its eyes to these violations.

Another indicator of the Government's changed attitudes is that Pakistan's leading English daily *Dawn* owned by the family of Interior Minister Mahmud Haroon is also openly advocating the release of Indian films in Pakistan. In an editorial titled "A Choice Of Films" the newspaper said: "We should seriously consider the possibility of importing a limited number of Indian films on some kind of barter basis. India does not only produce star-studded extravaganzas that feed our clandestine video circuit."

Even more surprising is the fact that many people in the movie industry are now openly demanding the screening ... Indian films in Pakistan. Says Haroo... Rashid, the chairman of the Pakista... Film Exhibitors Association (PFEA): "The protection to Pakistan's film in... dustry has induced a false sense of co... placency and has denuded film makers ... the urge to make quality films." This vie... has been supported by S.H. Fatmi, ... former PFEA president who has voic... the same opinion and suggested that ... Indian films should be released in pha... starting with the old ones whose prin... are lying in Pakistan and are the le... property of distributors.

Disenchantment: The film industry ... has not veered round to this view sud... denly. Disenchantment has been growi... steadily, with the performance of the ... National Film Development Corpora... tion (NAFDEC) which was supposed to ... in charge of importing quality films ... Pakistan. This is said to have had ... adverse effect on Pakistan's own ...

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...y-general of foreign affairs with the ...ll minister of state. In May 1980 he ...ver as foreign minister.

Nobody's Stooge: Shahi also scores ...major points in his detailing of the ...ndent policy pursued by him on be... of Pakistan in the case of Pakistan's ...wal from the US-sponsored Central ... Organisation (Cento), admission to ...-aligned movement and his initiatives ...ious international forums. In that ... he also laid heavy emphasis on his ...egotiating bilateral agreements, par... with reference to his work on the ...act with India.

...Shahi's most forceful argument is ...e allegation also casts reflection on ...'s image inasmuch as it implies that ...'s foreign policy, of which he was ... architect, was influenced by him in ...ests of a foreign power. Shahi, in his ...lso insists that the relationship be... Pakistan and the US which culmi... in the agreement of September 15, ... was in Pakistan's interests.

...ith *The Muslim* and Shahi declined to ...ent on the case when approached by ...TODAY on the grounds that it was *sub ...* Shahi, however, has stated that if he ...e case he will donate the Rs 1 crore ...h he is claiming to any charity that ... Court approves of. Meanwhile, the ...agonists are busy scrutinising the ...ce of evidence in the case—Shahi's ...ic career, albeit for different rea... in this case, at least, history will ...ly be the judge.

—QUTUBUDDIN in Karachi

...ays Hameed Zaman, a leading ...Our own industry refuses to come ...n shell made of glamorous sac... Present-day Pakistani films are ...ontemporary. They have no re... to current day reality."

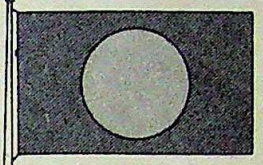
...er people in the film industry also ...e a strong case for the import of ...movies. Says Usman Peerzada, ...ed in a controversial British-Sri ...oint venture *Sita Devi*: "Amritsar ... not a cultural invasion but a ...shock which we have to overcome ...aking better teleplays."

...Jahan, the celebrated singer, ...in India recently has also added ...e to the plea for the screening of ...ilms and the exchange of cultural ...

...It looks as if there is no divorcing ...from other aspects of Indo... relations and those who want to ...dian movies will have to do so ...ely for some time to come.

BANGLADESH

Break With The Past



WHEN THE Bangladesh Government announced its New Industrial Policy (NIP) last month, it was making a major shift in its overall economic policies which have been followed for the last 10 years. In an abrupt break with the past, the new policy package largely concentrates on the growth of "free economy" by expanding the areas of investment in private sector and thereby reducing the role of the public sector to a bare minimum.

The policy which will come into effect from July 1 is expected to generate a great deal of government support both in terms of financial assistance and administrative approvals. Said Shafiul Azam, the adviser in charge of the Industries and Commerce Ministry: "I am a great admirer of the private sector and I believe the industries will run better under private management."

As the brainchild of the nation's new ruler, Lt-General H.M. Ershad, the chief martial law administrator of Bangladesh, the new economic order is certain to get top priority. He told the business community recently that he "firmly believes that trade and industry are an integral part of our economic life and that you are playing an important role to keep the wheels of the economy moving". Ershad added that the Government and the business community are, and should be, partners in progress and that "we should work together in natural alliance to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the people and ensure them their basic minimum needs".

Under the new order the jute and the textile mills which are the two major industries in Bangladesh and its largest export earners are now poised to be returned to their former owners. However, the mills which were once owned by non-Bengali Pakistanis will remain under the public sector. All these industries were nationalised by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government, following the country's birth in 1971. At present there are 68 jute mills in Bangladesh of



Ershad: top priority

which 33 were set up by the Bangladeshis. Said Azam: "The *modus operandi* for the return of the units, including the verification of the claims of Bangladeshi owners, will be worked out later."

Increased Investment: The NIP has brought down the reserve list to six for the public sector investments while it has increased the areas of private investment from 22 to 41 sectors. The concurrent list which covers both public and private investments has been raised to 13. The public sector will now be confined to arms and ammunition, atomic energy, air transport, telecommunication, power generation and forest extraction. The rest will be bracketed in the private

Shafiul Azam announcing the new policy: bold new move



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sector, which had been demanding reversal of the policy which allowed 80 per cent of the economy in the hands of the public sector, leaving the private sector to play a subsidiary role.

The new policy was not entirely unexpected. The governments which came to power after the assassination of Mujibur Rahman in 1975 tried to denationalise the jute, textile and other industries but could not move much in the face of tremendous political pressures. When the late President Ziaur Rahman took steps towards disinvestment of public sector industries as suggested by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) he had to face a great deal of opposition, both from his own ruling party as well as from the Opposition.

The IMF had stopped disbursement of SDR's and had asked the former governments of Ziaur Rahman and Abdus Sattar to go for disinvestment or withdrawal of subsidy to the industrial units under public sector. An IMF team is now staying in Dacca to ascertain if Bangladesh is following the IMF's performance criteria.

The new industrial policy has given enough advantage to the business community by fixing the time limit for sanctioning of an industrial project and disbursement of loans for it. The process of obtaining sanction for an industrial unit in existence for some time was "really a faulty and cumbersome one", said a businessman.

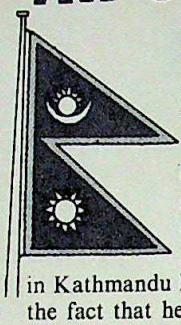
Earlier, the martial law authorities, by a regulation, allowed the people to convert their black money into white for the purpose of productive investment. Under the regulation people could convert untaxed money into white by paying only 15 per cent tax if they invested the amount in productive fields specified, failing which they would have to pay another 15 per cent (total 30 per cent) tax. The source of income would not be questioned, the regulation assured. The amount of black money circulating in the country has been estimated to be about Taka 500 crore.

Meanwhile, the new policy has been acclaimed by the business community who have described it as "bold, wise, far-sighted and imaginative". The former Bangladeshi owners of jute and textile mills have urged the Government for early implementation of the policy particularly the return of their mills. However, many former owners are still waiting to know the terms and conditions while getting back their industries. If things move as the Government has planned, the response of domestic entrepreneurs and donor countries would have a major contribution in shaping the economic destiny of a nation that has still to shrug off its unenviable title as an international basket case.

—IHSANUL KARIM in Dacca

NEPAL

An Uneasy Optimism



PRIME Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa—who has just completed his first year in office as Nepal's second 'elected' prime minister—can look forward to some stormy debates in the Rashtriya Panchayat (National Assembly) which convened in Kathmandu last month. This, in spite of the fact that he has played his cards well, thwarted all moves by his opponents to dislodge him, and consolidated his hold on the centres of power including the palace. While even his critics marvel at his deft handling of ticklish and seemingly insurmountable problems, it is certain that he has not succeeded in endearing himself to the general public.



GOPAL CHITRAKAR

Thapa: the problems remain unsolved

From the taxi-driver to the former prime minister, the message is the same: total disillusionment with the Government's inability to solve Nepal's basic problems. "I had told the King in the '60s when Thapa was first chosen as prime minister that this man cannot run the show. And I have been proved right," says former prime minister Tulsi Giri.

Impressive: On paper at least, Prime Minister Thapa's performance has been impressive. He was largely instrumental in ensuring victory for the Panchayat system in the referendum of May '80. In spite of a near total boycott by the proponents of the multi-party system, he went ahead with the general elections in May '81, won handily in his own home constituency, and was elected prime minister by the Rashtriya Panchayat. In May-June this year, elections were also held to fill seats in the 4,051 town and village panchayats, and the 75 district panchayats. Despite allegations of rigging by rival candidates, sporadic incidents of violence that took a toll of nearly 10 lives, and, again, a virtual boycott by the major multi-party opposition groups, Thapa has carried out the reforms prescribed in the third amendment of the Nepalese Constitution.

However, Thapa's detractors see his performance in a different light altog "Corruption has become a national tution, and inflation in the last month was 30 per cent. What good is a gover like this?" asks an editor of a Kath daily. Indeed, even as the Governme mises to eradicate corruption, scan reports of corrupt practices at all level bureaucracy appear almost daily in the papers. The most talked about incide month was the bank embezzlemen involving a businessman of origin—Umesh Jain. Jain is alleged to deprived the Nepal Bank of over Rs by signing false ques, no doubt the connivance some of the bank ficials. He is curr in police custody

Inflation: To outside visitor, prices of essential modities like egg 8.4 per dozen) c a shocking experie Even the price of ric Nepal is a rice-exp ing country—rec a whopping 20 cent rise with period of a for last month. "Yes price of rice has g up but if you loo the trend of price in the last 2-3 y I don't think it is alarming," says nance and Commerce Minister Y.P. P adding, "we hope to ease the situation selling rice from our reserves."

With the banned Nepali Congress in a state of suspended animation on acc of the deteriorating health of its v leader, B.P. Koirala, and the comm split into a plethora of factions, Th main opposition in the foreseeable f will come from within the panchayat rarchy and the volatile students. Nearly students with Marxist leanings were arre prior to the recent elections. He will no encounter rough weather within Rashtriya Panchayat and an even fe onslaught from the local press.

Unless the economic indicators tak upturn in the near future and Thapa ceeds in tempering corruption, it will doubt be a herculean task for him to hold to the reins of office.

—ASHOK R. PANDEY in Kath

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"Resources are what resources can do.
The wealth of an organisation
is thus an assessment of how productively
they are employed,
the risks they can be subject to
and the challenges they can face."

Shri C.H. Choksey
Chairman: in his letter to shareholders.



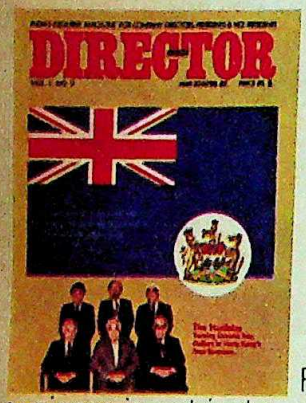
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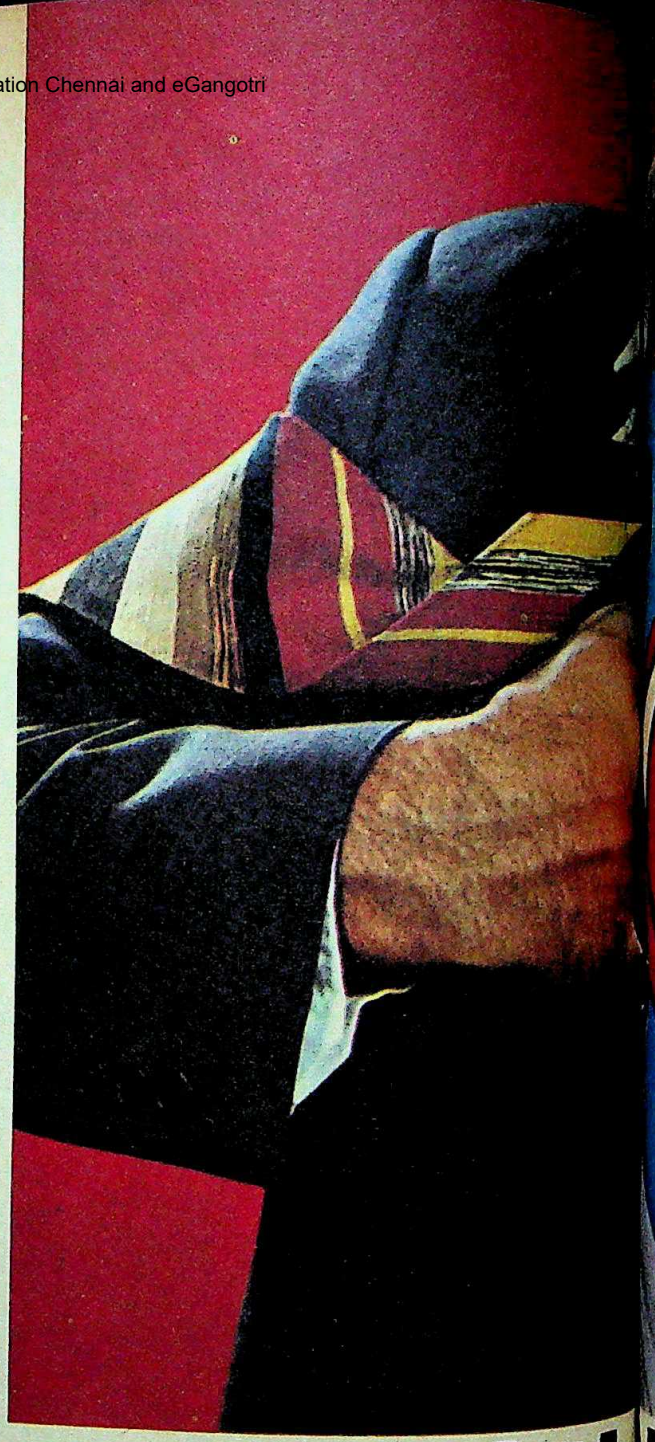
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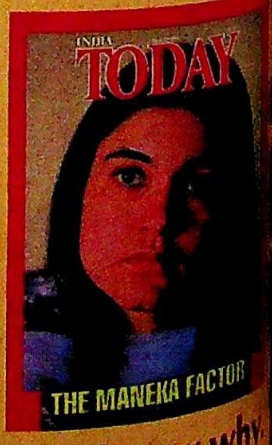
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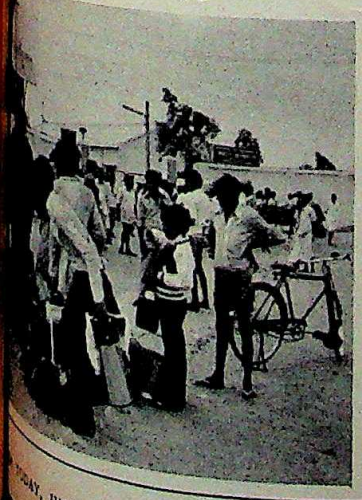
THEN THE Sri Lanka Government opened a duty-free complex in Colombo in November last for convenience of its massive labour force ed abroad, little did it imagine that it turn out to be an eldorado for enIndian businessmen. But in the months Indian tourists from ram on the east coast—who follow est route to Colombo—have inrom 1,200 a week to a whopping ey spend an estimated Rs 3.6 crore buying up electronic goods and at the complex.

Sri Lanka High Commission in is flooded with applications for says Deputy High Commissioner S.D. singhe: "I spend the whole day sign-" The number of visas issued by the High Commission jumped from last year to 33,195 within the first six of this one. The Regional Passport Madras has to bend over backwards with the demand for passports which rom 497 in November last to 2,700 nth.

mad rush for Colombo is mainly f the extraordinarily cheap fares to Madras. The second class fare from to Rameswaram is Rs 36.50. From waram the Shipping Corporation of ns a steamer every alternate day to Talaimannar Pier, 44 km away, and s Rs 65 for a seat on the upper deck s 45.90 for one on the lower. From annar regular trains ply to Colombo; nd class fare is Rs 30.40. So for only Rs a passenger can reach the duty-free if he travels by the lowest class. The from Madras to Colombo is Rs

Indian tourist to Sri Lanka is alto carry $250; because it is a neigh-

at Rameswaram: big profits



bouring country visas are not a problem and can be obtained within a day. The Indian Customs in Rameswaram allow people returning from Colombo to bring Rs 1,000 worth of goods free of duty; goods worth Rs 2,000 would be charged 160 per cent of their value as duty and on goods exceeding this amount the duty is 330 per cent. Most Indians pick up electronic goods such as two-in-ones, videos, refrigerators, cookers, washing machines and television sets.

Profit Motive: While initially only genuine tourists to Sri Lanka used to avail of the facility, it has now become been a highly organised and profitable business. A clutch of businessmen based at nearby Ramanathapuram, Madurai, Salem and Madras 'hire' people to visit Colombo by paying them Rs 200. Large groups of 50 to 100 people are organised and are given money to buy the $250 that each of them is entitled to. A study of the people applying for visas at the High Commission—specially for 'group tours'—indicated that most of them were in the income group of Rs 400 to 600, and under the heading 'profession' they usually entered 'unemployed'.

These people who could hardly afford a trip to a city now pose as tourists to Sri Lanka. They pick up the goods that their financiers fancy and they are grateful for the joyride and the free meals. The financiers pick up the goods from Rameswaram and these are immediately taken to Madras, Salem and Madurai where they are disposed of. One of them said: "Even with the duty imposed I can make a 100 per cent profit for most of the goods that I bring in."

Booming Business: At Rameswaram the port complex is jampacked with people. A ship arrives around 1 p.m. from Colombo and customs officials have to work till midnight to clear all the passengers. As an indication of the booming trade duty collected at Rameswaram post has jumped from Rs 15 lakh a month to an estimated Rs 30 lakh. The ship which used to carry hardly 300 passengers is now chockful; last month special trips had to be arranged to meet the rush. Tickets are being sold at a premium and the bid goes up to Rs 150 a ticket on some days. To have more money in hand, Indians carry with them spices, coffee, stainless steel utensils and plastic goods as these items have a huge demand in Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Government has become worried at the unprecedented flow of Indian 'tourists' to Colombo specifically headed for the duty-free complex. But they are aware that they have been caught on the wrong foot and are too embarrassed to pass any strictures. Said Samarasinghe: "It's a big headache for us and now we don't know what to do with this new bottleneck."

—RAJ CHENGAPPA in Rameswaram

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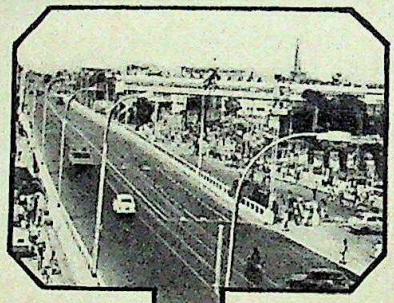
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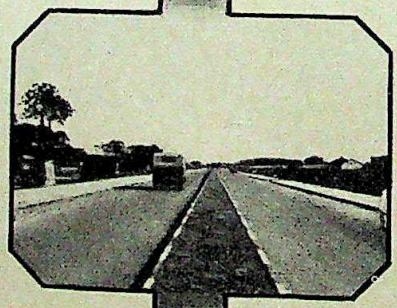
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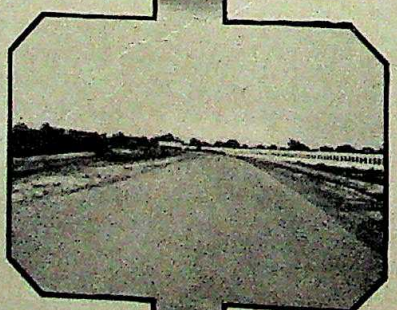
Announcing three new remedies for Calcutta's acute arterial congestion.



On 31st March, 1982, CMDA inaugurated a major Flyover for fast moving vehicles over India's busiest, most crowded railway station-Sealdah. This project is designed to provide Calcutta with an important "double" artery. It will allow the smooth flow of thousands of vehicles from one end to another; it's three underpasses will enable lakhs of pedestrians to cross to the other side in time to catch their trains; the ground level lanes are now reserved only for slow-moving traffic like handcarts and rickshaws, as long as we have them!



On 15th April, 1982, CMDA inaugurated Calcutta's first Express Bypass. A broad, beautiful Ring Road which will not only provide an important link to the new townships coming up in East Calcutta and Baishnabghata—Patuli, but will also be a catalyst for the development of other virgin areas. In terms of communication facility, this Eastern Metropolitan Bypass will connect the North of Calcutta with the East and South, completely bypassing the overcrowded sections of the city.



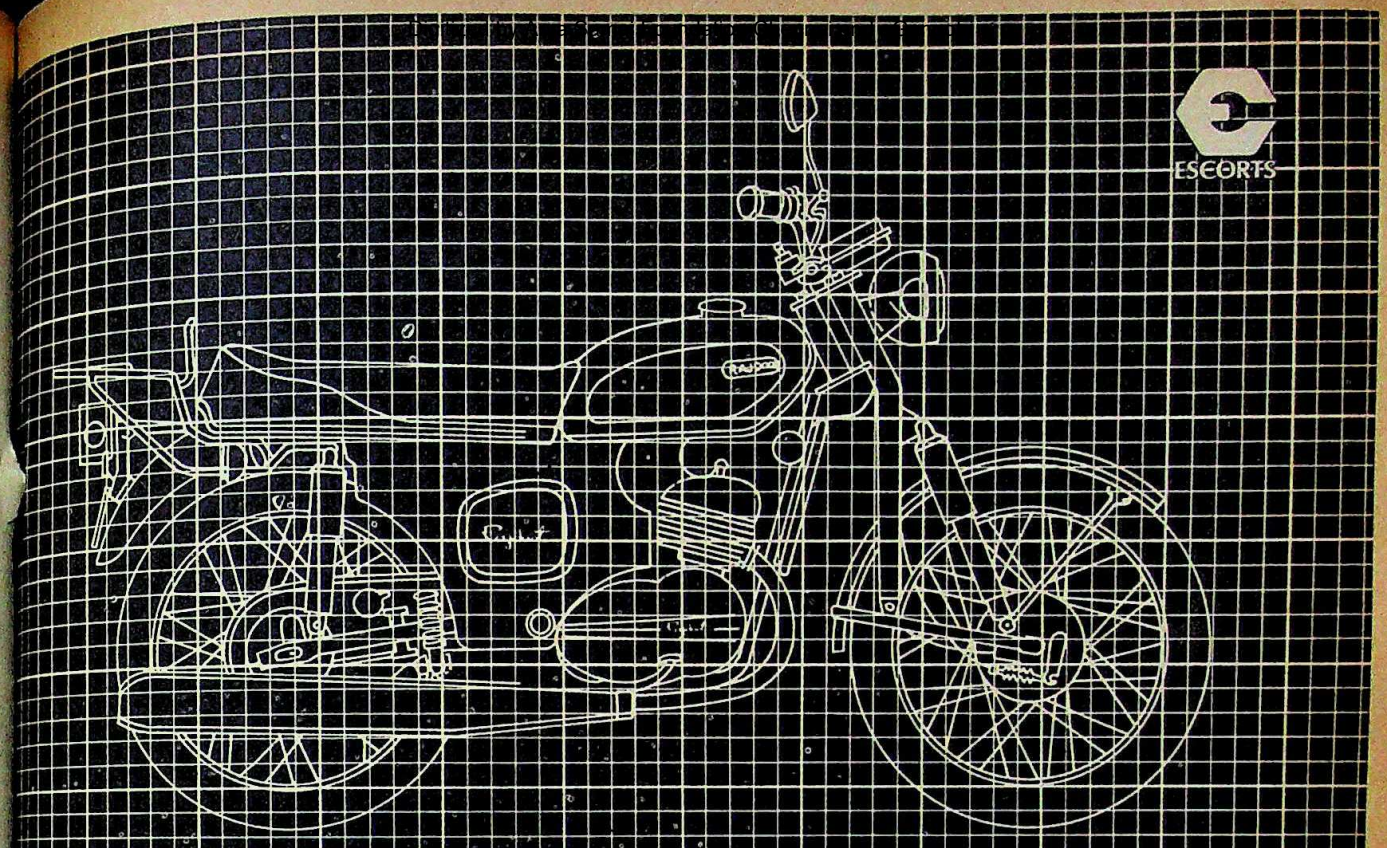
Since the Metropolis is not the Calcutta city alone, there is something for Kalyani also—the Barrackpore-Kalyani Expressway, commissioned on 3rd May, 1982.

Yes, these are the three new decongestants specially prepared to give the travelling public of the Calcutta Metropolis, fast relief.

CMDA

CALCUTTA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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NARCOTICS

High In The Valley

OUTWARDLY, it was just another drug bust: a truckful of charas packed in soap boxes bound for Bombay. There were, however, two items of significance. One was the value of the charas: Rs 4.2 lakh in the Indian market. The other was the origin—Kashmir Sheikh Yunus, the drug pedlar whose arrest led to the bust was the 350th charas smuggler arrested over the past year for smuggling charas from Kashmir, once again underscoring the fact that Kashmir, the tourist paradise of India has another rapidly growing business—drug smuggling.

The latest haul was the third major charas catch in recent months. Last February, Mohammad Ramzan was arrested in New Delhi carrying Rs 40,000 worth of Kashmiri charas. His arrest came hard on the heels of another seizure earlier in the month when two men were nabbed on the Srinagar-Jammu highway with 16 kg of charas on them.

The lucrative—and clandestine—trade now notches up an annual turnover of Rs 15 crore. The drug is extracted from the hemp plant, and the entire operation, from cultivation to the final despatch out of Kashmir, involves about 100,000 people, who rake in tremendous profits.



Hemp plants being destroyed near Anantnagh: tip of the iceberg

The farms are concentrated mostly in the foothills of the Pir Panchal range in the east of Kashmir, but the plants are also cultivated in the north-western areas of the valley. Camouflaged by stalks of maize, the hidden crop is nourished with fertilisers supplied to the paddy growers and orchards at subsidised rates. The lucrative harvest has caused a labour problem as well; as the extraction of charas coincides with the paddy harvest towards the end of September, the labourers prefer the Rs 50 a day job on the hemp fields to the Rs 15 earned on the paddies.

According to estimates, one 'kanal' (5,440 sq ft) of land yields 0.5 kg of the purest charas, called 'attar', which, at the high prices prevailing currently, can assure the cultivator many times the profits earned on a paddy field or an orchard of the same size. Making the charas is rather tedious: early in the morning, the workers grind the hemp flowers on their palms before the dew dries, and the greasy and silvery substance left on the palms is scraped off with a knife and rolled into small balls. The balls are wrapped in the sheaths of corn-cobs and then baked in a fire. The finished dish is the charas which is sold for Rs 1,000 a kg locally. By the time the stuff gets to Bombay the price triples and in the international market Kashmiri charas sells for as much as 20 times the price back home.

Meaningless Punishment: For shipment abroad, the charas has to be very carefully packed, as its pungent smell can give it, and its purveyors, away. After the precious commodity has been packed into polythene sacks, these are stuffed into tyre-tubes, rolled carpets, apple crates and in gift parcels sent by post. Even when the traffickers are caught, the usual punishment is two years' imprisonment, a fine of Rs 2,000, or both—a mockery of justice. And even this can be transformed to a farce: in a recent case the accused was punished with a fine of two rupees, and in another, he was detained till the rising of the court. As it is mostly the couriers who are caught, the growers and the gang-leaders manage to stay clear.

In any case, the police appear to be more concerned with the effect of the drug at home, because in Kashmir, more and more people are savouring the doubtful pleasures of charas. An official police report warns: "Wider sections of people are getting drawn under its evil spell. From 13 *takiyas* (smoking-dens) in Srinagar city alone, its tentacles have spread extensively, even into the temples of learning. The recent se... charas from a Jammu students hos... lights the critical situation."

No Coordination: But ominou... ded evaluations are no substitute... determined attack at the roots of the... Presently, the departments of excise... revenue intelligence and forests are ... to keep constant vigil on the ope... However, the record so far has been ... Says M.Y. Naseem, state excise and ... commissioner: "This failure is due... adequate facilities, but the much... coordination on all sides is lacking... instance, if revenue officials would ... land used for hemp cultivation proper... regularly every year, we could at least ... clear picture of its quantum of growth... for other ways to counter the menace." ... official of the forest department said ... use of pesticides to destroy the charas ... can cause an ecological imbalance and ... turn the surroun... land barren, which ... can't afford."

The revenue ... cies claim to have ... almost 600 kg of ch... since 1971, chal... more than 147 ped... court and detained ... person, Yusuf Dad... Bombay, for a brief ... This is only the tip ... iceberg: it is alleged ... the kilogrammes th... away are helped by ... and relatives of m... and politicians, as w... travel agents. In 19... ree police officers, ... ing a deputy superi... dent of police, were ... by the state Govern... on charges of assisting drug smugg... Srinagar airport.

The police plead that they cann... out on their own. Asserts Naeem A... public relations officer of the Jam... Kashmir Police: "We can only lay our ... on a person in possession of charas, or ... he tries to smuggle it out. Normally w... come in if asked by the excise and re... departments. The legal proceedings are ... ducted by the excise magistrate himself." ... report submitted to the Government ... police have suggested stringent measu... attack the trade, including "making ... offence cognizable and non-bailable ... ing severe penalties and forfeiture of ... persistently used for this purpose". But ... authorities appear to be dawdling o... decision, and meanwhile, the drug ba... Kashmir are making hay, and charas ...

—GHULAM NABI K...

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Super speed chart

Item	Time
Cakes	6 minutes
Chicken	6 minutes
Paneer	1 minute
8 Closed toasted sandwiches	5 minutes
4 Open toasted sandwiches	8 minutes
Waffles	4 minutes
Sheesh kababs	8 minutes

Come, taste and see

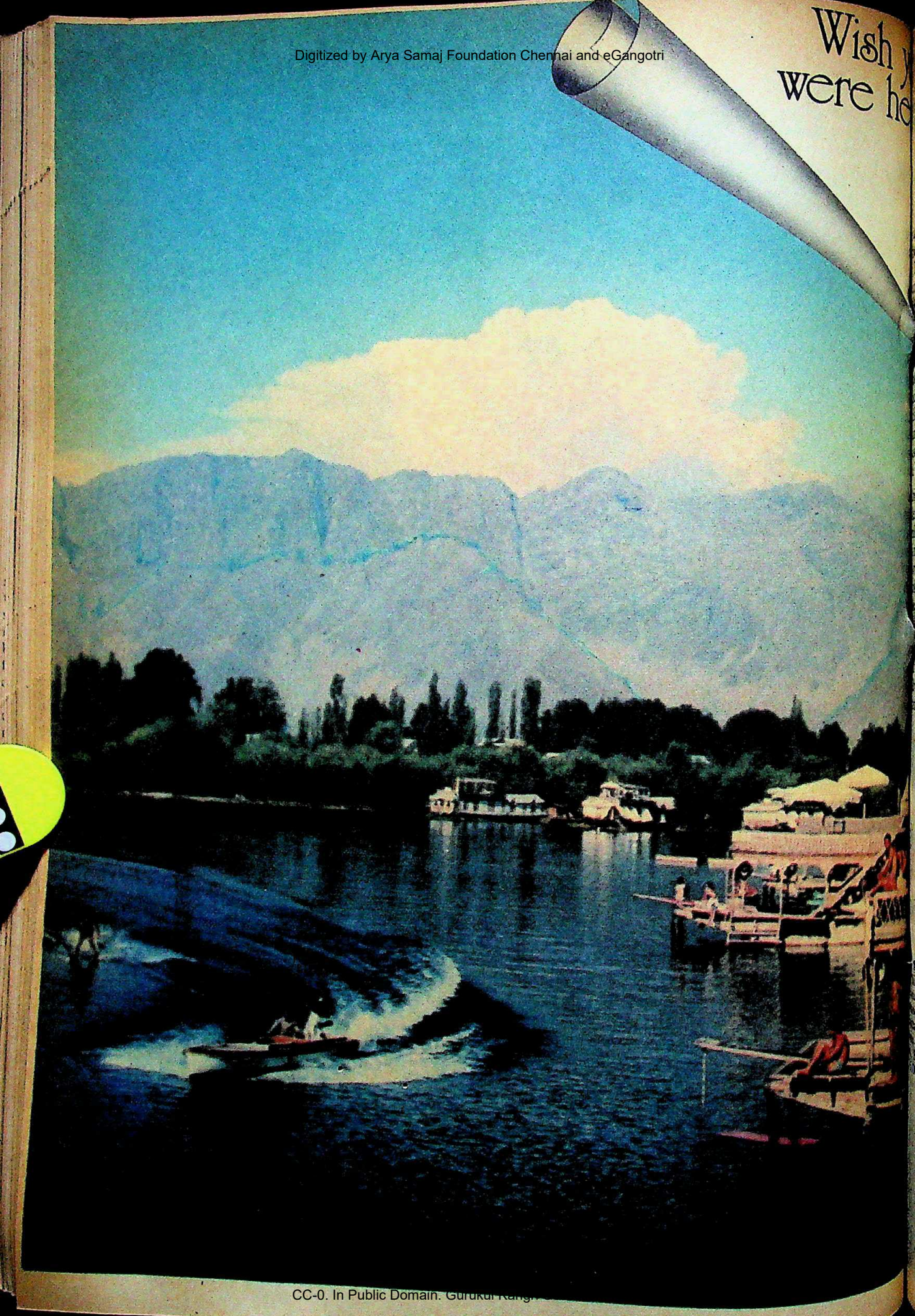
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Srinagar

From a houseboat called "LUXURY HOUSE"

...on the Lake. And the name ...Houseboat couldn't be more ...It is like a lovely floating ...house that we have all to ...es. There is a walnut ...d living room with old- ...furniture and carpets. A ...le dining room, two ...rtable bedrooms with ...ed bathrooms, tap water ...y. And our very own staff ...sama Ghulam Nabi and ...boy Kasim. You would just ...t.

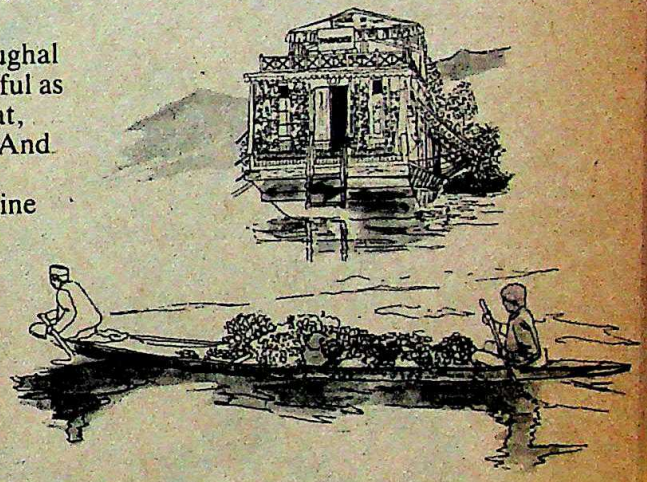
...is not only a super cook (we ...Kashmiri, Western or Indian ..., just whatever we fancy) he ...rvellous host as well. ...es if we don't eat what he ...is enough and fusses over us ...mother hen. And the kids ...lore Kasim.

...this morning (chota hazri in ...course) to the sound of ...s, water lapping gently ...t the side of the boat and a clear view of the distant snows. Then the flowerboats arrived just laden with the most gorgeous flowers. I thought I was really and truly in paradise.

Everyday the boys have been swimming and water-skiing. I have spent several blissful mornings in the local markets browsing in the shops. Couldn't resist buying some beautiful bedspreads and an exquisitely embroidered shawl. They were absolute bargains. No need to allow anyone to guide you. I saw, compared and made my pick. Wait till you see them.

Yesterday we went to the Mughal Gardens . . .they're as beautiful as their names: Shalimar, Nishat, Chashmashahi, Pari Mahal. And we went all the way in those romantic shikaras. Just imagine lying back comfortably in an elegant boat, gaily curtained and canopied, and gliding through the picturesque lake. Tomorrow we go to Wular Lake, the day after to Yusmarg and in the following days to Daksum, Kokernag, Achhabal. There's so much to do, so much to see . . .I'm already thinking of my next holiday in Kashmir.

Does all this sound too good to be true? But it is. Wish you were here to experience it with me.



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Hazratbal — *the mosque houses the holiest of Muslim relics, a hair of the Prophet Mohammad.*
Shankaracharya Hill — *the hilltop rewards you with a panoramic view of the valley.*
The Mughal Gardens — **Nishat, Chashmashahi, Shalimar, Pari Mahal Garden** *each creates a magical enhancement of its own.*
Wular Lake — *the largest fresh water lake in Asia.*
Manasbal Lake — *Bird watcher's paradise. Watch the sunset.*
Sonamarg — *the Golden Meadow*

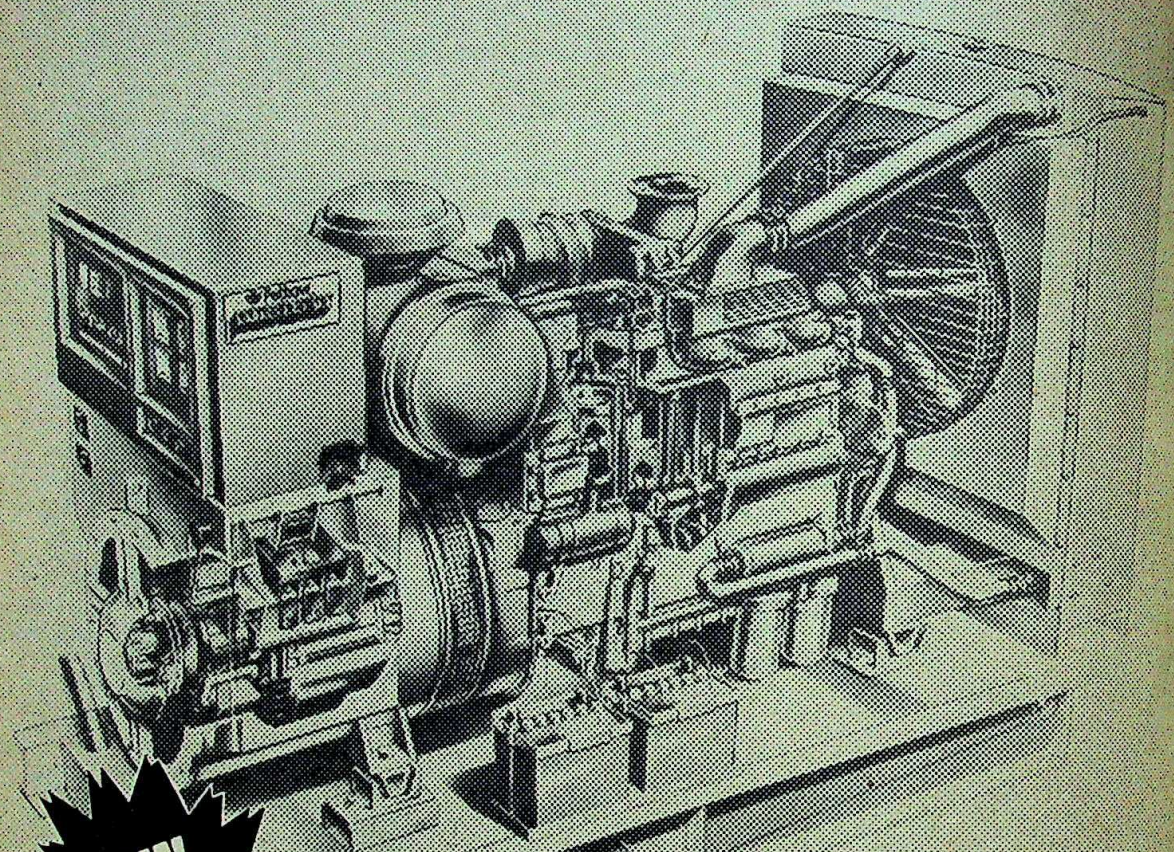
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ntil eath Do Part

*aluable,/The pure gold baby,/That
a shriek,/I turn and burn,/Do not
nderestimate your/great concern./
You poke and stir,/Flesh, bone, there
there—A cake of soap,/A wedding
ld filling.*

—Sylvia Plath in Lady Lazarus







(From left) Geeta Malik, Neelam Khanna, and Chander Mohini Saluja; victims of greed

TO AMOUNT of civilised debate can take away from the savagery of the traditional Indian marriage. In the last few weeks, eight have died in Delhi alone, victims of ...s' lust for more and more dowry. ...f them may be suicides, but even ... morally culpable. The victims ...ge from 17 to 26. Last fortnight it ...f summer's incandescent heat had ...brought cruelty to boiling point.

...ry is a conundrum defying rational ... Twenty-one years after the tooth... Prohibition Act was passed, ...ems to be battening on the con...ciety. Cash presents are now trailed ...ds for jewellery, utensils, gas con..., a scooter, a refrigerator, and a host ...goods. Delhi has been a nursery of ... movements; the city abounds in ... organisations, all committed to ... against sexism, sexual violence, ...rder, eve-teasing, and inequality. ...have not succeeded in slowing the ...ggernaut as it crushes one victim ...ther.

...uted Statistics: Delhi Administra...res from 1979 to May 1982 for ...gainst women—ranging from mur... ...ttempted suicides—show that mur... ...particular are dropping in number ...ers. But women's organisations dis...ffice statistics about dowry deaths. ...m that there were as many as 394 ...deaths during 1980 alone, up from ...ing International Women's Year, ...e police are also accused of dragging ...feet over dowry cases, and of being ...ble to easy persuasion by the boy's ... For this reason, police figures de... ...seem to be extremely low and ...

...e latest spate of dowry deaths began on May 30, when Prem Lata, a Punjabi Bagh mother of two, and Kusum, were both burnt to death. Two days later, Bharati Narula, 20, died of burns sustained in the house of her father-in-law Prithvi Raj Narula, a teleprinter operator in the Press Trust of India. Bharati's death came as a rap on the knees of the press, and there was a huge uproar. The Narulas, apart from being denied bail by an additional sessions judge, have become targets of ostracism and neighbourhood rage.

But the grim toll did not end. On June 5, lecturer Shakuntala Arora allegedly burnt herself to death. On June 7, school teacher Geeta Malik died of burns at Safdarjung Hospital after a frantic SOS she sent to her brothers reached them too late. The very next day, Usha Rani, a bride of eight months, was consumed in flames; her husband and father-in-law were detained for abetment to suicide. Neelam Khanna, a Paharganj housewife, died of burns on June 11; Chander Mohini Saluja, a young stenographer in the Supreme Court, died under suspicious circumstances at Simla on June 16. On June 21, 17-year-old Meena suffered serious burns in a Dakshinpuri hut; a magistrate recorded her dying statement that her husband had set fire to her because she hadn't brought enough dowry.

Impossible Odds: Yet, even with such explicit evidence, law enforcement agencies face impossible odds in prosecuting dowry deaths. Dowry murders are bailable, non-cognisable offences—police investigators cannot step in unless a complaint is registered. The Indian Evidence Act stipulates that dying declarations are not usually definitive evidence unless backed by corroboration or endorsed by a magistrate. Even though the courts occasionally treat such declarations as evidence in the absence of other endorsements, they usually shy away from circumstantial evidence, and dowry murders are usually committed in the privacy of a house, with no eye witnesses.

There are therefore very few convictions. The Lok Sabha was informed in 1980 that in the two years ending 1978, 90 cases of dowry deaths had been registered by the Delhi Police. Of these, 81 were dropped for lack of evidence, six more were given the benefit of doubt, and only three cases resulted in convictions.

Subhadra Butalia, lecturer in English at Dyal Singh College, who runs Karmika, a forum for women's rights, says that the only consolation is that the public is becoming "more and more aware of dowry's evil". Butalia was an eyewitness to the death by burning of Hardeep Kaur in Jungpura Extension on October 18, 1978. Hardeep gave a dying declaration indicting her in-laws of the crime, and died two weeks after the burning. A lower court judge sentenced her in-laws and husband to life imprisonment, but the Delhi High Court granted them bail in early 1981, because of "lack of evidence".

Dowry is poorly defined even by the Dowry Prohibition Act, which says that dowry means "any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given . . . at or before or after the marriage as consideration for the marriage". But it states that presents in the form of "cash, ornaments, clothes or other articles" made at the time of a marriage cannot be deemed to be dowry. Yet, dowry is precisely that. Worse still, the Act stipulates that dowry is cognisable only if a complaint is made within one year from the date of the offence. And dowry is not time-bound—it continues to flow in the form of gifts on ritualised 'occasions' long after marriage.

"If a wife dies of unnatural causes," says Supreme Court Lawyer Chandermani Chopra, "the presumption should be that it is murder. Ideally, in such cases, the onus of proof ought to rest on the accused, unlike in criminal cases where the accuser has to prove the accused's guilt."

Materialistic: Investigations conducted by women's organisations reveal that in most cases the families have come into college education only recently, with the accompanying financial improvement, or

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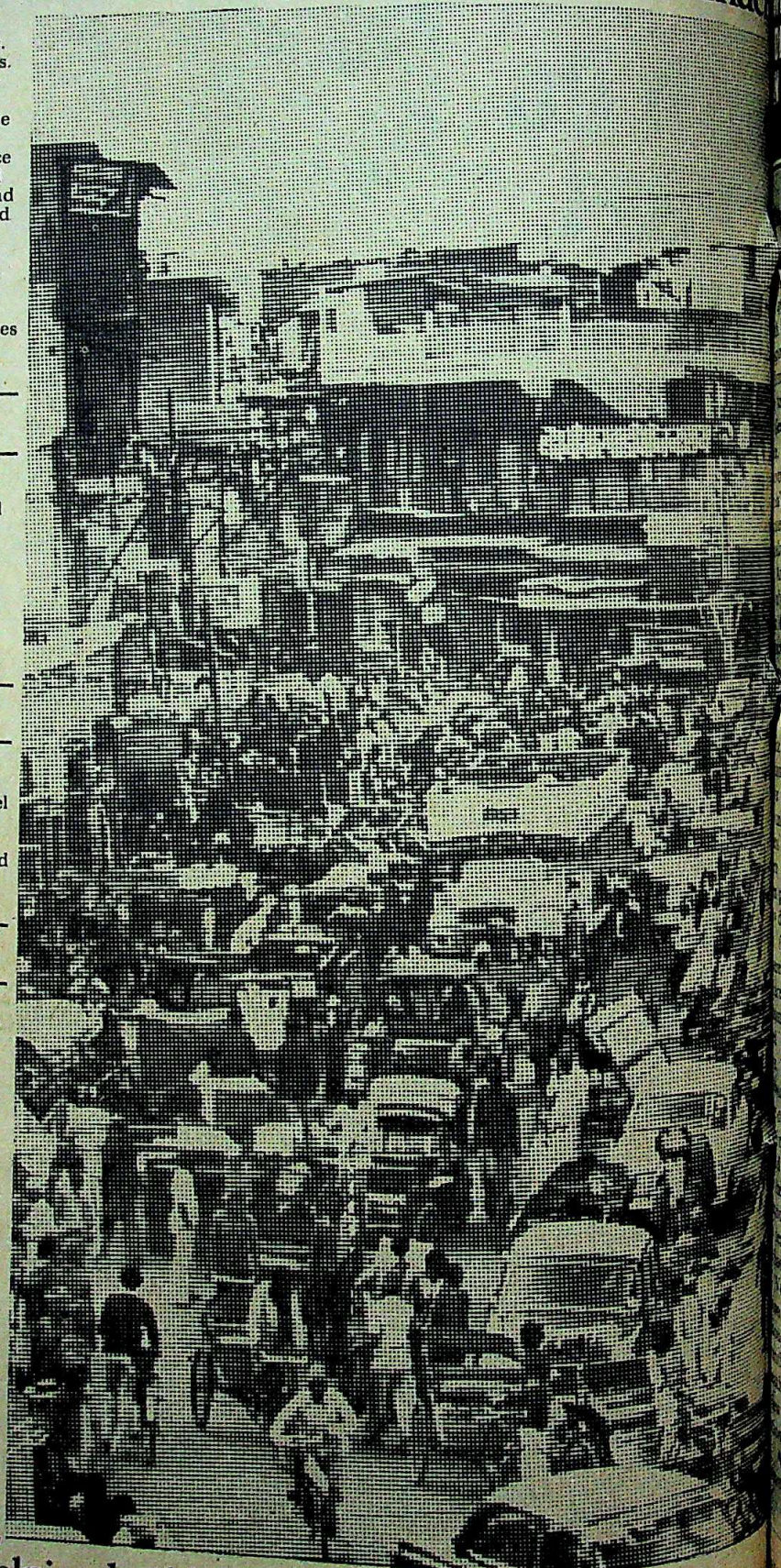
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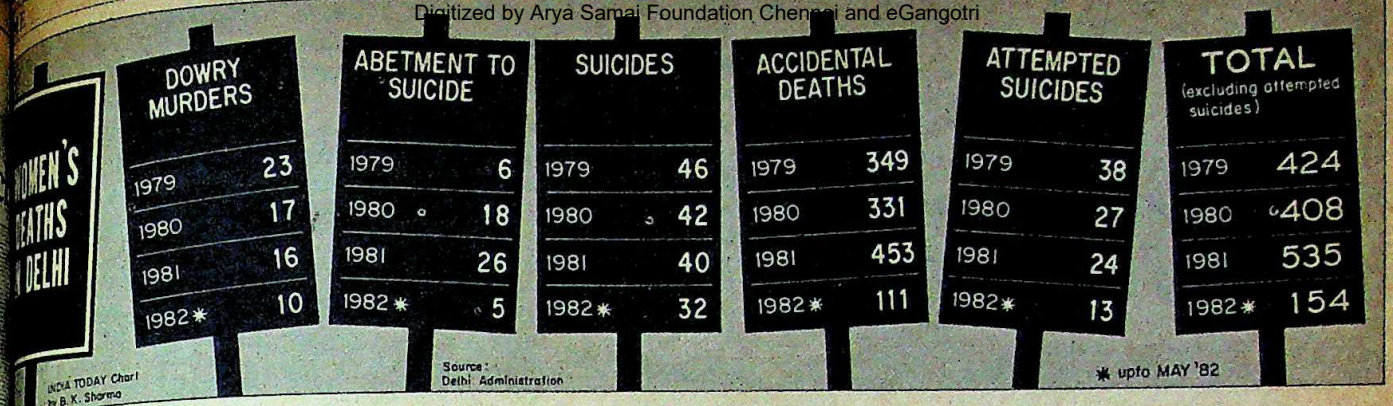


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suddenly come into considerable
ll these are factors that seem to
petites for more and more worldly
Dowry is also a convenient method
sing of black money: for this reason,
bles will ever declare all the presents
the bride.

ta Malik's father-in-law, for in-
was a railway clerk; her husband
r is a trained engineer. Bharati
's in-laws, too, were first-generation
people; her parents are wealthy
rs (contractors) at Kaithal. Shakun-
ntra's husband was
one in his family to
L.A.; her family owns
ive *halwai* (sweets)
Delhi.

a Mudgal, chair-
the Nari Raksha
another activist
nion, says that her
problem has been
ing anti-dowry sen-
in neighbourhoods
dowry deaths have
place. "I have found
eaths in Punjabi and
amilies," she says,
the girl seemed
d to stand up to
ment, and thus en-
her in-laws all the
These post-Partition
e have a tremendous
chauvinism. More-
the north, the girl's parents rarely
stay with her, so the tendency is to
r as much dowry as possible. The
n is worsened because Punjabis do
and dowry. Dowry is expected on
ts of the two sides' status."

ed Marwah, joint secretary in the
Ministry of Social Welfare, says that
gh the Hindu Code Bill has been
y amended to allow fathers to be-
property to their married daughters,
cases only does such equitable distri-
of assets take place.

parliamentary Joint Consultative
ittee under the chairmanship of Lok Sabha Member Krishna Sahi has, since 1980, been looking into proposed amendments to the Dowry Prohibition Act. The committee has toured the country extensively, and its report, which was due in December last year, is still not complete. Marwah says that the salient points of the proposed amendment are:

► a clear ceiling on all marriage expenditure;

► the giving and receiving of dowry being treated as a cognisable and non-bailable offence;



Protest outside the Saluja house: of little avail

► the participation of voluntary agencies in dowry eradication;

► the enhancement of penalty for dowry from a sentence of six months to two years, and the enhancement of the fine from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000; and

► the appointment of dowry prohibition officers throughout the country, the special training of such officers, and the granting of police powers to them, along with investigative powers aided by a five-member non-official committee.

Tardy Involvement: Marwah says that the National Institute of Social Defence in Delhi has been organising reorientation courses for both police officials and judges to enable them to prosecute dowry cases on a special footing; but he admits that the tendency to treat dowry as just another offence remains. Even the much-experienced Delhi Police has still not set up a special dowry cell, and the Delhi Administration's Dowry Cell has, according to women's organisations, been dismally tardy in following up specific cases.

The Social Welfare Ministry is also thinking of setting up "family courts", on the Japanese model, to prosecute dowry offenders, bring about conciliation in broken families, and play a vital role in family litigation. Judges with at least 10 years' experience are proposed to be trained further in psychology and counselling in order to man these family courts, and the Department of Legislation in the Union Law Ministry is currently studying the proposal "actively".

One death is a tragedy, a million deaths are a statistic. All these measures smack of the proverbial too little, too late in the long and sickening history of dowry deaths. No proper national survey has been carried out so far on the fast spreading evils of dowry.

Like much else, dowry deaths eventually become easy pegs to hang opportunism on: a Delhi film maker decides to make a film on bride-burning and the nation's most martyred daughter-in-law, Maneka Gandhi, speaks in Baroda about the Government's indifference towards dowry. Undeterred by all the hue and cry, of course, and armed with a can of kerosene, a box of matches, and hearts filled with hatred, loathing and indifference, innumerable husbands and their parents ring their golden geese because their eggs are no longer golden but only yolk-and-white dispensables.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG

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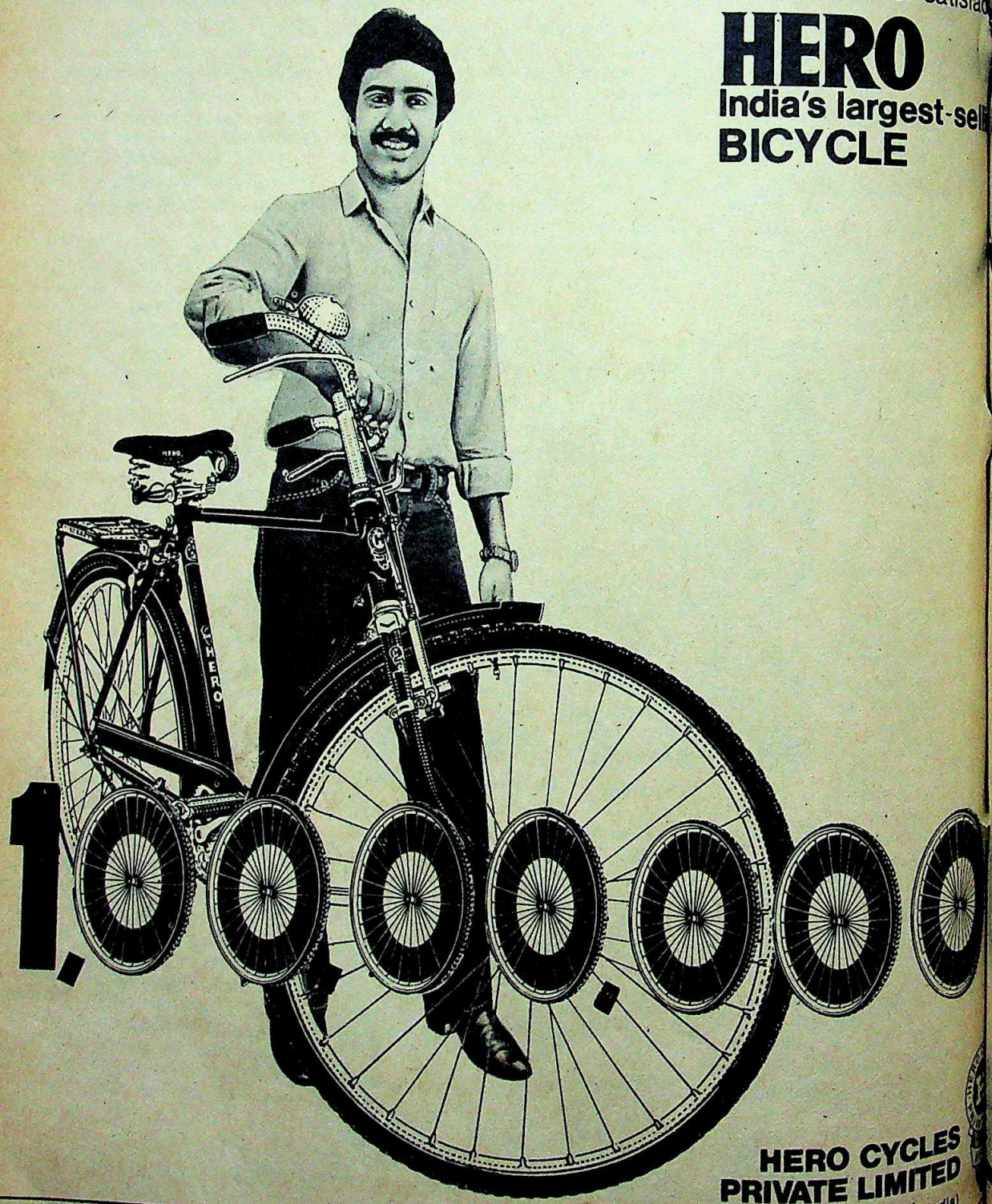
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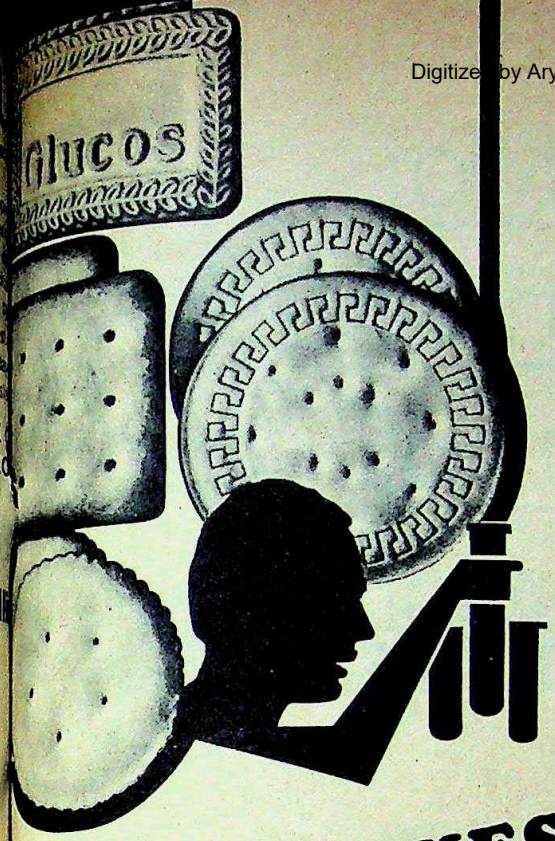
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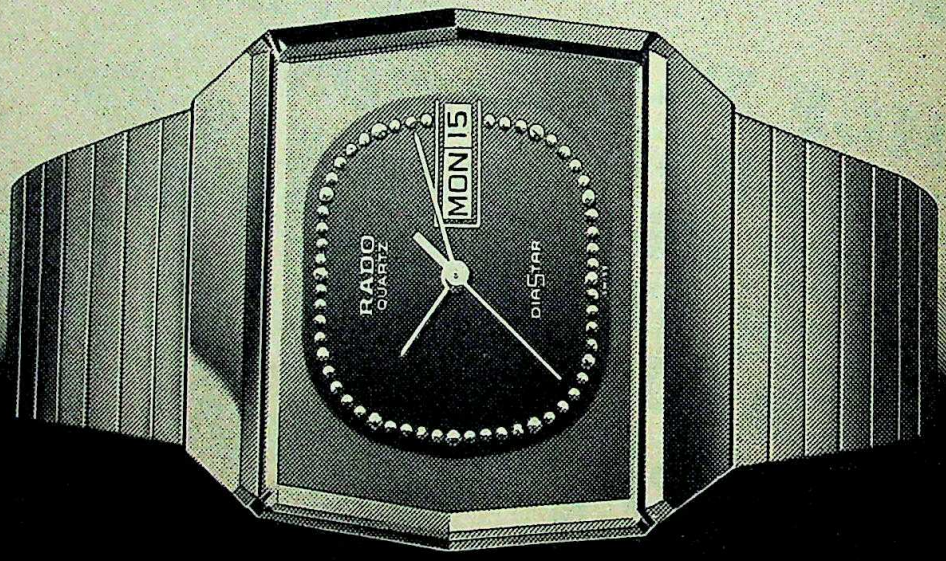
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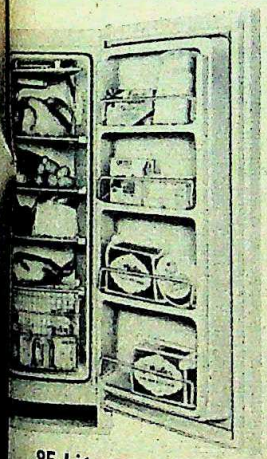
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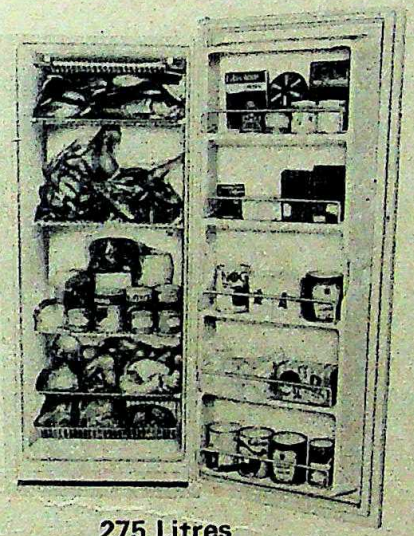
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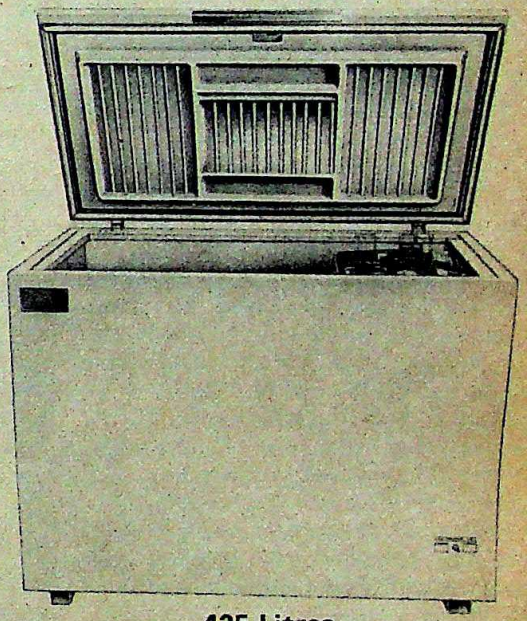
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DACOITS

A Farewell To Arms

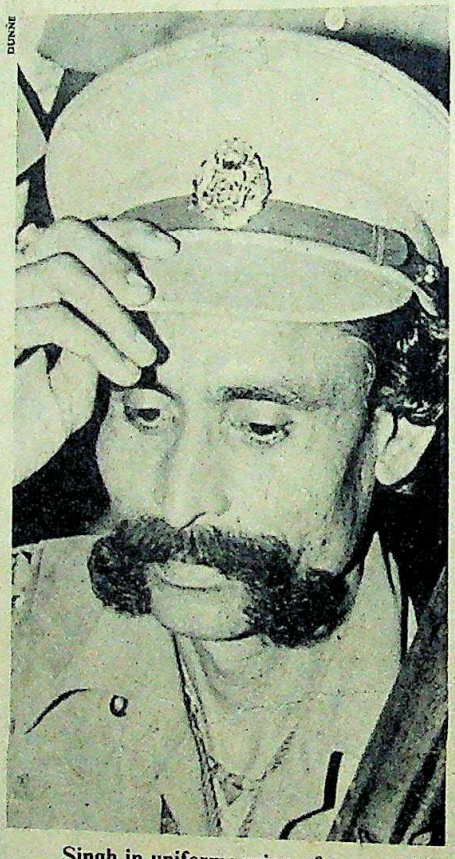
HE CAME like a conquering hero. Tall and lean, dressed in the uniform of the police he had fought hard for years, dacoit king Malkhan Singh's farewell to arms in the town of Bhind in north Madhya Pradesh before an awed crowd of 30,000 had all the trappings of a Roman triumph. As the convoy of eight police jeeps arrived at the parade ground at 11 in the morning of June 17, the crowd could hardly contain its excitement. As Malkhan ascended the dais to drop to his knees and touch the feet of Chief Minister Arjun Singh, the crowd roared its approval. A wave of his American self-loading rifle swelled the roars. And, finally, when Malkhan slowly stripped himself off the rifle and his Chinese 9 mm pistol to lay them before a portrait of the Goddess Durga, the almost regal act of submission was received with a satisfied cheer.

After the ceremony on that June morning it was clear that the stamp of approval had been placed on yet another Chambal legend. It began in 1964 when 17-year-old Malkhan was picked up under the Arms Act. Eighteen years later, the dacoit and his gang were the most feared in the region and had amassed a total of 94 police cases, including 18 cases of dacoity, 28 of kidnapping, 19 of attempt to murder and 17 cases of murder. The number of kidnappings carried out are believed to be much higher as, after a victim's release on payment of the ransom, police assistance is rarely sought. When the surrender was ultimately negotiated, Malkhan himself carried a price of Rs 70,000 on his head.

Supreme Confidence: In the Chambal there is unfortunately little difference between a hero and a dacoit and Malkhan's gang had earned a lot of respect because it had fought over half-a-dozen 'encounters' with the police and had come through relatively unscathed. Another point in his favour was that he never participated in the kind of massacre dear to the hearts of Phoolan Devi and Chhabiram Pothi of Uttar Pradesh or Ramesh Sikarwar of Madhya Pradesh who shot dead seven men earlier this month. Says Malkhan today: "I have no sympathy for people who massacre innocents." But his gang was extremely active otherwise—in the three years from 1976 to 1978, 24 cases were registered against his gang but in 1979 the number rose by a staggering 38.

So supreme was his confidence that on Republic Day in Nawagaon, district Agra, Uttar Pradesh, Malkhan unfurled the national flag in the presence of 2,000 people. By then, the gang had accumulated a more than respectable arsenal that included sten-guns, light machine guns, semi-automatic rifles and even a wireless set. Malkhan, however, denies that he ever had a set, as it was not surrendered when he and his followers in crime laid down their arms at Arjun Singh's feet.

Malkhan's rise to infamy took quite some time. In 1970, he was charged with murder but was acquitted for lack of evidence. In 1974 and 1975, three cases of dacoity were registered against him but Malkhan continued to be in the regional ruffian class. The crucial year was 1976, when a series of incidents pushed the fledgling dacoit closer to a confrontation with Kailash Narayan, sarpanch of his village, Bilao. To begin with, Kailash's men had testified against Malkhan in the murder case. Secondly, one of his supporters was allegedly responsible for carrying away one of Malkhan's female relatives. Thirdly, Malkhan, a deeply religious man, was furious with Kailash's encroachment on some land attached to a temple in Bilao village. Lastly, Kailash, Malkhan, who was then sarpanch, from the panchayat because of his record.



Singh in uniform: reign of terror

Growing Gang: On May 5, 19 feud reached its bloody climax. M tried to gun Kailash down with a but in the bargain killed one man and two others. Kailash, with six bullet survived. Malkhan fled to Jalaun Pradesh and this was when his career took off. With a relative, Ghan he laid the foundations of what become the biggest and the best-arme in the Chambal.

Operating primarily in the dist Jalaun, Agra and Etawah in Uttar P and Datia and Bhind in Madhya P Malkhan's gang spawned a number ler gangs which at one time or anoth allegiance to Malkhan. In the Ch gangs break up and join in new perm and combinations and among the that Malkhan's spawned are th Ghanshyam, Baba Mustaqeem, Babu Vikram Mallah and Vijay Singh. others.

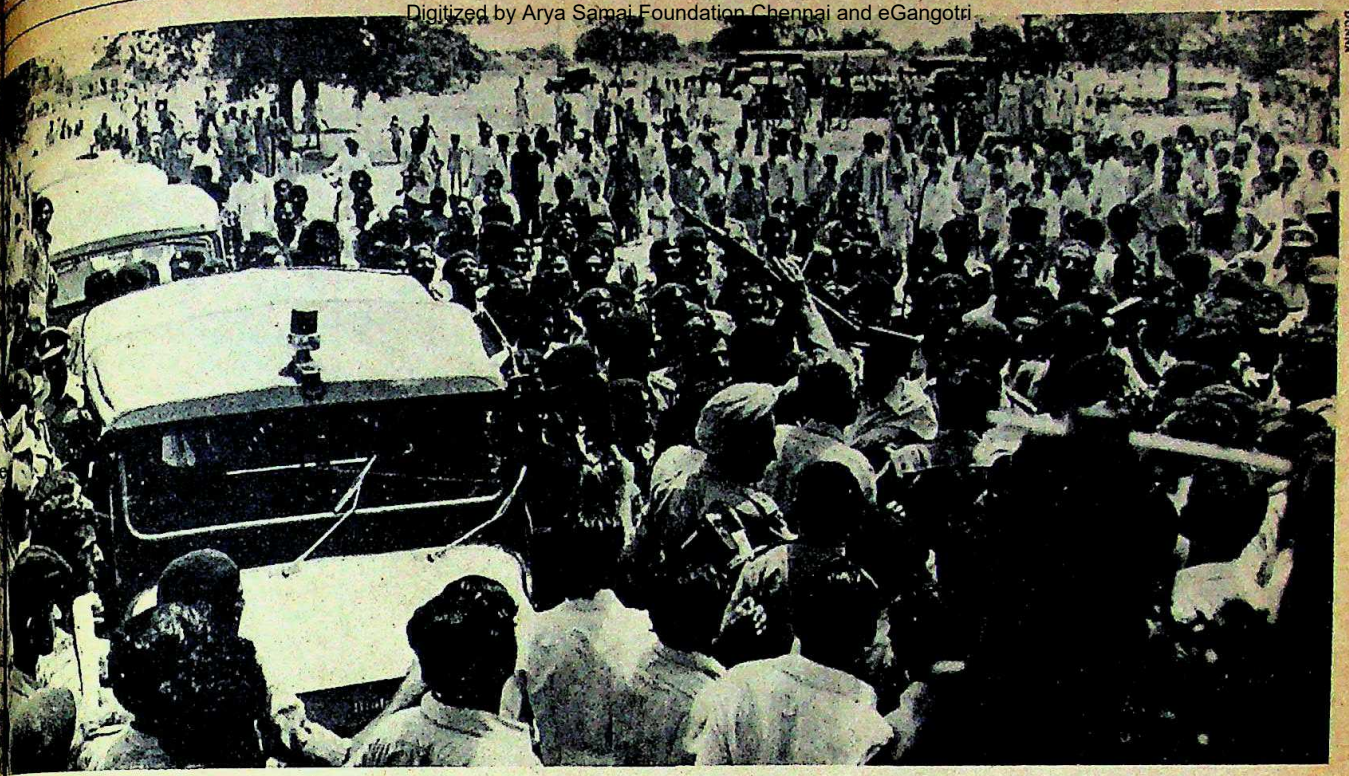
CAGING such a redoubtab peror of dacoits' was not goin easy, and the state Government realising that the police were not going the better of Malkhan, decided to softly. In November last year came sign that the gang leader was wi negotiate—two kidnap victims in district's Ater tehsil were released and local parliamentarian that Malkhan to come in. As Malkhan's men had killed Kailash and avenged their lead reported desire to surrender was under able, but the move fell through before began.

The second attempt to bring the ster in proved more promising. Three journalists were already in the Ch trying to photograph, film and write dacoits at work—Kalyan Mu Prashant Panjiar and Brij Raj Singh decided to concentrate on one gang settled on Malkhan's. Says Mukherj felt that this would give us a focus making contact took us several month the course of their attempts to reach Malkhan, Mukherji came to Bhadoria, a landowner in Bah tehsil in district who had first met Malkhan years ago. Police records list Bhadoria harbourer and an arms supplier to M although Bhadoria asserts that he o shelter and that too because he va life.

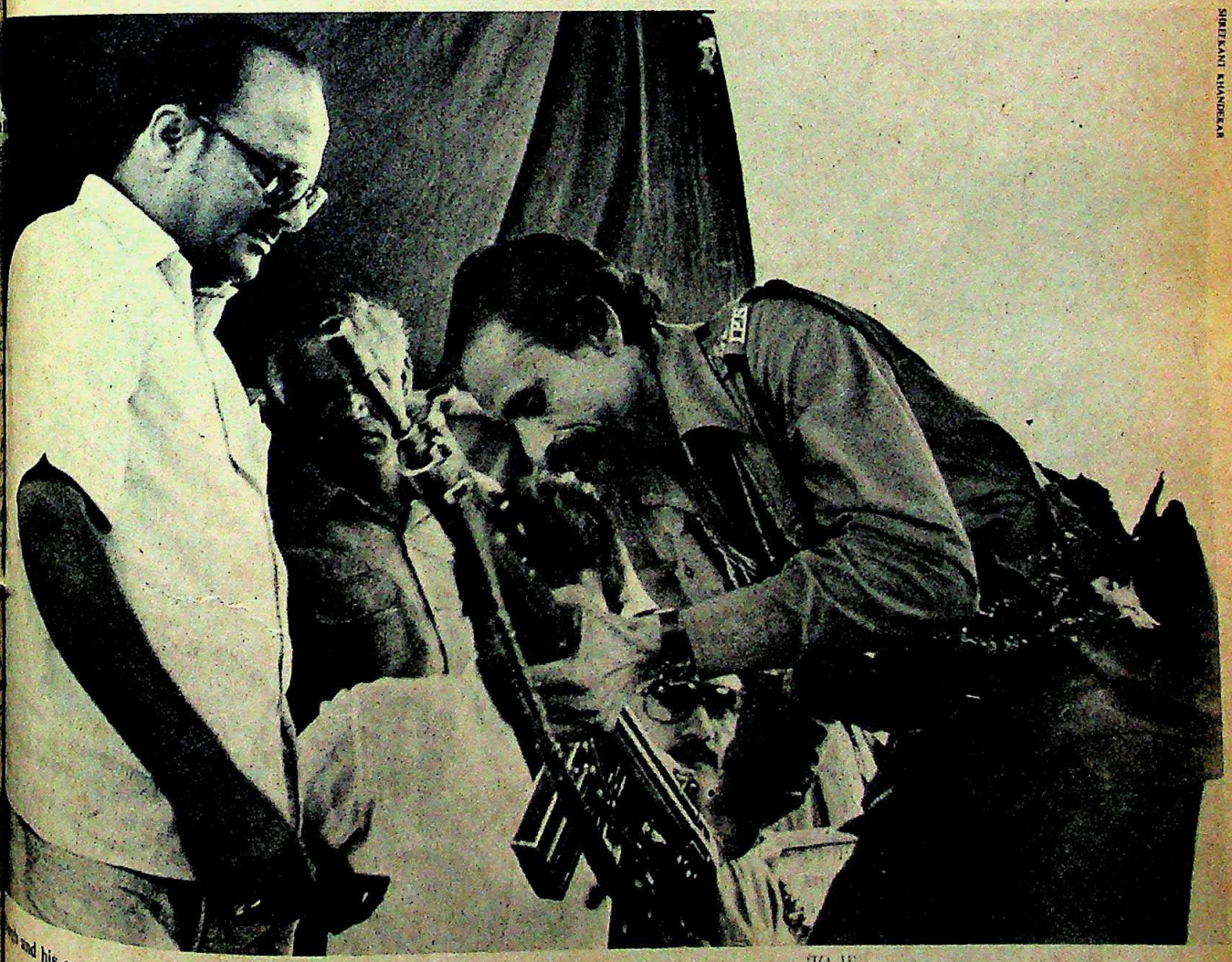
Surrender Talks: Bhadoria was many Malkhan contacts arrested ea

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DUNNA



SHRIKANT KHANDEKAR

and his gang arriving in triumphant procession (above) and the final surrender at the feet of Arjun Singh: a hero's welcome

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he was brought to here his arrest was under the Madhya anti-dacoity ordinance. met Bhadoria in prison the second time the of Malkhan's surren- up. Bhadoria says was the only man on could have persua- khan to surrender." got in touch with a Dal legislator, Rama ingh, who reported k with Arjun Singh chief minister was

kherji and his friends ith Bhadoria got to lkhan, too, was will- eared that the surren- be just a ploy to trap him. After dacoit m Pothi was shot dead Pradesh's Mainpuri March 3, there were hat he was killed while s surrender had been queered the Malkhan strengthened the solve to surrender, if to the Madhya Pra-

n Singh was taking no He directed Navin a former Congress whom Malkhan had polling agent in two to deal separately lkhan. One of Mal- nditions was that the ment on temple land hould be corrected and rmed to safeguard it. nditions included: he men should not be sent to the their relatives and friends should arassed, they should not be hand- kept in police custody and their l should be better than normal.

Stages: Mukherji met Arjun eral times and on April 22 delivered from Malkhan. On May 24, look to the ravines documents that that the temple land issue had been There was some confusion when received differing messages from and Bhoota—he lost his temper nded to know what was going on. answer, Mukherji brought along Superintendent of Police Rajendra Chaturvedi's wife Deepa is al- have gone along and tied a *rakhi* to wrist as a symbol of trust. Deepa and calls it an attempt to "ma-



SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

Malkhan's gang being fitted for prison uniforms after surrendering

lign" her. But the surrender was only a matter of time. An anxious Arjun Singh, nevertheless, came secretly to Gwalior once again and briefly met Chaturvedi, Mukherji and Bhoota at the air-field; he insisted that the surrender take place before he left for America on June 18 for a kidney operation. His wish was fulfilled. Malkhan and 19 others spent their last night in the ravines near Madanpura, 18 km from Bhind.

After his surrender, Malkhan said: "I escaped to the ravines because I wanted the land taken away from the temple in my village to be restored to it. I have wronged no one." Now that the temple land dispute has been cleared, Malkhan's desire to leave the hard life in the ravines received a substantial boost. The dacoits' life in jail is certainly a change: they are housed in a separate yard, in the centre of which is a double-storeyed building. They are reportedly given special food and, all in all, lead a life akin to a rest cure, treated like warriors after a long battle rather than the common desperadoes they really are—last fortnight, one of them was even practising on the harmonium that had been thoughtfully provided in the long, airy hall that houses the prisoners. No wonder that Malkhan can say now: "I feel happy. All I want to lead now is a life of peace."

Angry Reaction: The surrender move, despite the emotional icing, did not impress everybody. Muslim, one of the gang members, left with seven men telling Malkhan he wanted to opt out of the surrender and his group is believed to have taken away a sizeable number of arms. But most important is the effect that the VIP treatment that Malkhan and his men are receiving in jail will have on the police, especially the lower ranks.

The surrender of 1972, when a group of dacoit leaders surrendered to the late Jayaprakash Narayan, obviously raises bitter memories of pampered killers. Although Arjun Singh turned down Malkhan's request for an open jail facility, there have been angry reactions to the special treatment. There is also a great deal of suspicion about the trials of these men which, for security reasons, will be conducted in the jail itself.

In fact, there are many who wonder if justice will indeed be done. At the surrender ceremony on June 17, the crowds and the police struggled with each other to catch a glimpse of the men who had wreaked havoc in their lives not so long ago. On that morning. Malkhan visited his village for the first time after becoming a fugitive, and thousands of villagers lined up to look at the man they had at the same time feared and respected. The surrender has dimmed none of the dacoit leader's mystique and may even have heightened it. The story of Malkhan Singh, and his grand finale, illustrated the tragic fact that while violence will always be condemned, the men for whom it is a way of life will almost always be hero-worshipped. The denouement at Bhind was reminiscent of a Hindi cinema, except that the roles had been reversed: the villain became the hero.

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR in Bhind

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Company Meeting: Hindustan Lever Limited

A PERSPECTIVE ON EDIBLE OIL

Speech delivered by Dr. A.S. Ganguly, Chairman, Hindustan Lever Limited, at the Annual General Meeting held at Bombay on Friday, 25th June, 1982

INTRODUCTION

India, like other petroleum-importing economies, has been concentrating its efforts for the last ten years on augmenting foreign exchange earnings to pay for mounting petroleum imports and exploring new energy sources. The large national issue prior to this was self-sufficiency in food, which the country has spectacularly achieved in the case of cereals. However, in two other areas, much remains to be done — the production of pulses, and edible oils and fats. These are so important that the Government has included them in its list of national priorities.

The reason why I have referred to petroleum hydrocarbons and food is because these two, along with the population problem, tend to dominate the economic and popular thinking in this country. I have chosen to highlight the issues involving edible oils, not only because it is a significant part of Hindustan Lever's business, but also an important national issue; and unless we continue to highlight the problems involved and seek solutions, the nutritional and economic consequences will become progressively intractable.

This is not the first time that a Chairman of this company has chosen the AGM to review this rather important subject. It was discussed at length by Mr. S.H. Turner in 1959 and Mr. T. Thomas in 1974. More recently, an integrated strategy for increasing the production and consumption of oilseeds and oils in our country was made by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, an eminent agricultural scientist.

Besides, a number of other recommendations have been made at various conferences and quite a few of them have found their way into agricultural and commercial practice. For example, a project for the development of a cooperative structure for increasing oilseed supplies through an integrated programme of production, processing and marketing is being implemented by the National Dairy Development Board.

However, in spite of all these efforts the gap between demand and supply is widening at the fairly low per capita consumption in the country. This has led to a rise in imports.

During 1979-80 and 1980-81, the country had to import close to a million tonnes of edible oils per annum valued at Rs. 600 crores. If one projects this into the rest of the decade, the import bill for edible oils alone would be staggering. Production would need to rise by about one-third to eliminate imports.

While one can debate our ability to be self-sufficient in oils and fats, there can be no alternative to increasing the country's edible oil production significantly. There has also been near unanimity on the ways to augment availability. Yet, the results have not come up to expectation. All the recommendations made by my predecessors and experts in the field are as valid today as when they were made. Is it possible to bring about a quantum improvement in oilseed production and availability in the country? From the point of view of foreign exchange outflow as well as malnutrition resulting from low fat intake by the population, the problem is becoming so critical that it is not amenable to marginal solutions.

Any solution to the problem must take into account a combination of enhanced production with reduced dependence on imports. To assess the opportunities which obtain in the edible oil economy, and develop a possible strategy to bring down the burden of imports and improve availability, I shall discuss the topic in four parts:

i) A brief review of the current status of oilseed production
ii) Some economic and nutritional aspects of the problem
iii) Improvement in traditional areas, and
iv) The potential for Rice Bran and Oil Palm

I. CURRENT STATUS

The total area under oilseeds cultivation is currently estimated to be about 16 million hectares. The average rate of growth of oilseeds production which was 3.46 per cent during the period from 1952-53 to 1964-65 declined to 1.62 per cent between 1967-68 and 1978-79. One of the main reasons for this decline was the poor increase in the area under oilseeds cultivation during the latter period. This was in sharp contrast to the significant improvement in the productivity of cereal crops during the same period. In fact, except during the First Five Year Plan period, oilseeds production has fallen short of target.

Production data relating to edible oils comprising groundnut, rape/mustard, sesamum, safflower, niger, soyabean and lower, highlights large variations from year. Groundnut, which constitutes 70 per cent of the oilseeds, has hardly shown any improvement over the last five years. A major reason this poor performance is unfavourable weather. Another factor is that out of the area under oilseeds cultivation, less than per cent is irrigated.

Given this brief background, the likelihood any major breakthrough in the foreseeable future would seem to be quite low. If, however, some determined and systematic steps are taken to introduce fairly well accepted cultivation measures, improvement is certainly possible. In spite of this, the dependence on imported edible oils is likely to continue for quite a time. The other point of grave concern is the danger that the already low per capita edible oils and fats consumption is likely to fall further.

II. SOME ECONOMIC & NUTRITIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF OIL SHORTAGES

A. Economic

Next to petroleum, the two major items of import for India are edible oils and fertilizers. The problem, however, is not restricted to edible oils only. The inedible oils used in soap making and for paints and varnishes also have to be considered to get a complete picture. As per capita income grows, the demand for soaps, whose income elasticity is 1.7, is bound to grow. In a similar manner, with the increase in construction and other development activities, the demand for paints and varnishes is growing as well. The pressure on non-edible oils, however, has been greatly relieved due to the increasing use of non-traditional and new oils. This has been made possible due to, among others, the pioneering work undertaken at the Hindustan Lever Research Centre on oils such as castor, rice bran, karanja, sal and neem during the last 20 years.

It is the continuous shortage of edible oils which has contributed to escalating inflation and draining of foreign exchange. An instructive picture emerges if we consider how imported oils are utilised: a major portion of the oil is for the requirement of the vanaspati industry. This is through imports. This keeps the pressure on the indigenous edible oils market. The logic of providing the vanaspati industry with oil must be low the local market price and maintain some kind of informal price control on the product, however, needs to be assessed. Vanaspati is largely consumed by the more affluent and bulk consumers.

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A PERSPECTIVE ON EDIBLE OILS

...would, therefore, be rational to lift the in... price control and charge an economic ... for the imported oil. The consequent sur... generated by the Government through ... of imported oil to the vanaspati industry ... then be used as an additional resource for ... development of indigenous oilseed produc... Perpetuating the system of keeping the ... of edible oils artificially low through im... runs counter to the long-term aim of in... indigenous production.

...making a plea for several steps that need to ... in order to reduce the burden of im... it is useful to examine the supply and ... figures between 1970-71 and 1980-... From a deficit of six lakh tonnes in 1970-71, ... were faced with a deficit of more than a ... tonnes in 1980-81. This gap is likely to ... for the next few years; by very conserva... estimates, it could rise to two million tonnes ... the end of the decade, even at the very low ... of per capita consumption.

...uggestions have been made from time to ... that a partial cushion against import costs ... be provided by not only rationalising the ... policy of imported oils but also by ex... oilseeds like HPS groundnut and cakes ...meals, as well as other agricultural com...dities. The cost of imports of edible oils ...ed about 0.3 per cent of the country's ...rt bill in 1960. This went upto about two ...cent in 1970 and is currently between five ...six per cent. During the same period the ...e of agricultural exports has steadily gone ... Though this argument has obvious limita..., a sharper focus on some of the ag...tural exports could help enhance foreign ...change earnings. The opportunities to export ...ge are uncertain from year to year, but there ...been a decline in the value of staple items ... as tea and oil cakes. To some extent this ...been made up by coffee, tobacco and ...es. In other words, a more organised and ...alised effort to boost agricultural exports in ...country's areas of strength could help re... the impact of the cost of importing edible ...

...he export of HPS groundnut has been a ...productive foreign exchange earner over ...years. Before this was canalised, there was a ...encouraging and progressively increasing ...d. Having reached a peak in 1976-77, it ...ped drastically in 1979-80. If we de...alised the export of HPS groundnut, it ...ld be possible to recover lost ground over a ...ort of time and achieve a potential export of ...lakh tonnes per annum. While this would ...en an outflow of 90,000 tonnes of oil, the ...ly prevailing prices would be about $160 ...n equivalent to about three lakh tonnes ...ported oil.

...nother important source for generating ...ign exchange is the export of extractions. Unfortunately, India's policy on this has been inconsistent and the country is looked upon as an unreliable supplier. In the international market there is increasing availability of soyabean meal and soyabean producing countries have undertaken vigorous and aggressive marketing efforts to promote the use of soyabean meal. This, coupled with uncertainties in the availability of extractions from this country, has actually deprived us of a very large share of this profitable market. To build a sizeable and steady market share in competition with soya meal, India will need a long-term strategy. This involves sophisticated marketing in a growing but increasingly competitive world market. It is also essential to have a long-term understanding between exporters, the animal and poultry feed industry and the Government so that a reliable supply for exports can be maintained.

Simultaneously we need to direct efforts to build up value-added exports in certain areas where opportunities exist. Initially these activities will require support to be competitive. Thus castor based derivatives, compound animal feeds, processed sal products, etc. could develop into significant exports. With the progressive establishment of markets for some of these value-added products, the export of raw oils, such as castor and sal, can be tapered off.

There are certain inherent strengths in our agricultural sector which could provide some buffer against foreseeable costs of imports if tackled methodically.

B. Nutrition

The minimum nutritional requirement of fat specified by the Indian Council of Medical Research is about 20 kg per capita per annum. In recent years, however, the per capita availability of oils and vanaspati has been far below this figure — around 5 kg. If the national average is that low, the predicament of the poorer sections of society is bound to be even worse.

Nutritionists have traditionally been focussing greater attention on the need for calories, proteins, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins in diet than on edible oils and fats. The vital role of oils and fats in human health is too well-documented to be ignored, especially given the very poor consumption levels in this country.

Oilseeds are rich in proteins and fats, and fat is equally important in the diet of weaker sections of the population as its caloric density is more than twice that of proteins or carbohydrates. Essential fatty acids from oils and fats constitute membranes of living cells. They are also used by the body to make prostaglandins, important metabolites involved in regulating the muscles and the brain. Fatty acids also play a role in immunity. Fats convey and metabolise fat-soluble vitamins and play a part in the biosynthesis of several long chain alcohols necessary for transmembrane transport of sugars.

Without adequate fat in the diet, it would be impossible to solve the problems of calorie deficiencies of the vulnerable sections of our population such as infants, children and pregnant mothers. Continuous deprivation of fat leads to inadequate water retention, greater water loss through the skin, scaling of the skin, impaired metabolic efficiency as evidenced by the increase in endogenous oxygen intake and decreased tone of all cell functions and muscles. Since essential fatty acids constitute the major framework of all cells, decreased availability can also lead to impaired growth and diminished mental and physical capacity.

The consequences of low per capita consumption of oil are serious and pose a threat to the health of our nation. Therefore, while tackling the problem of shortage of fats, we need to urgently examine its availability, especially to the vulnerable sections of society through existing or new distribution channels.

III. WHAT CAN BE DONE IN TRADITIONAL AREAS

Over the years productivity has improved in certain traditional oilseeds within the country even though the sum total has been below expectations. It is now necessary to constantly examine ways to increase the spread effect as well as to tap new methods to improve the rate of growth.

Next to foodgrains, oilseeds production, of about 10 million tonnes valued at Rs. 2,500 crores, constitutes the main agricultural sector in the country. As stated earlier, the growth rate in oilseeds has declined from 3.46 per cent in the period 1952-65 to 1.6 per cent in the period subsequent to this. In order to achieve the Sixth Five Year Plan target of 13 million tonnes, it would be necessary to grow at over six per cent per annum.

However, even to achieve a modest improvement over the current growth rate of 1.6 per cent it is necessary to step up the outlays on research, development and the extension of oilseeds. In the Sixth Five Year Plan, out of an outlay of Rs. 6,000 crores on agriculture, only Rs. 65 crores have been earmarked for oilseeds development. Although it is an improvement over the Rs. 14 crores in the Fifth Plan, the total amount is still quite small. One of the methods of augmenting resources for the development of oilseeds could be the suggestion made earlier of recovering commercial prices from the vanaspati industry. At current prices this could generate upto Rs. 150 crores per annum. Allocating some of these additional funds for Research and Development would certainly help raise the growth rate significantly.

Further, increasing the area under irrigation for growing oil crops is the single most effective measure that can be adopted in a rapid and sustained manner. This will reduce the dependence on weather. Varietal and seed multiplication management, which has been successfully done in the case of cereals, will greatly help in restoring, if not improving the very poor rate of productivity. Finally, it is imperative that a consistent price support policy is evolved to persuade the farmer to sustain his activity.

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A PERSPECTIVE ON EDIBLE OILS

At this point, let us briefly review the status of traditional oilseeds where marginal improvements have been made in certain areas.

Of the total **groundnut** production in the country, about 16 per cent is the summer crop, which is cultivated in irrigated areas — the rest, 84 per cent, is the kharif crop and is primarily dependent on the monsoon. The competing crops are jowar, bajra, maize, and to a lesser extent, cotton. Currently, in terms of return per hectare, the net return on groundnut is highest in these regions, but with the introduction of hybrid bajra, the situation may change. Ideally, therefore, it is necessary to improve the kharif productivity and increase the area under rabi groundnut.

There is need for breeding new high yielding, short duration varieties of this crop. Large genetic stocks of improved varieties are now being maintained in groundnut breeding centres in India, some for selection work and to a limited extent for planned hybridisation and mutation breeding programmes. Although coverage under improved varieties is being extended in large areas in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra and other states, this has not yet produced the expected impact on groundnut production in the country. With our present knowledge and experience, and with the use of improved seeds, the application of fertilisers and trace nutrients, proper plant protection measures along with attention to the timing of sowing, optimum seed rate and adequate weed control, there is scope to increase the level of production by at least 50 per cent.

Rape/mustard is one of those crops for which both area under cultivation and production and yield show large fluctuations from year to year. One of the major problems is the non-availability of suitable seeds. Furthermore, various schemes have been adopted for foliar application of fertilisers and mass plant protection against Aphids, but the productivity gains have not been encouraging. In Uttar Pradesh, as well as in Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Assam, major gains are possible through uniform seed multiplication programmes and sustained extension work among farmers.

Though it is a traditional oilseed, **sesamum** has not received any sustained attention. The average yield of sesamum is gradually decreasing from year to year, partly due to the prevalence of serious diseases like stem and root rot and wilt, and partly due to mycoplasmal infections such as phyllody. Fungal and vector control is particularly important for this crop.

In the case of **sunflower** large-scale cultivation in our country started in the early seventies with the introduction of varieties from the USSR and Canada. However, even after ten years, progress of the sunflower development scheme has not been very encouraging. The main problems are heterogeneity in varieties, susceptibility to diseases like rust, alternaria, leaf spot and various root and stem rots, bird damage, poor seed set and genetic deterioration of varieties.

In the Sixth Five Year Plan, it is intended to increase the total acreage under sunflower to 7.5 lakh hectares by 1984-85 from its present level of slightly over two lakh hectares. The potential oil output from such activity would be large enough for this scheme to be pursued with a great deal of vigour.

The potential oil output from **cottonseed** is of the order of four lakh tonnes. However, only 1.5-2.0 lakh tonnes of oil is normally recovered. In order to improve oil recovery, as has been recommended for several years, it is essential to discourage the use of cottonseed directly in animal feeds and divert it from the ginning mills straight to crushing plants. It is also possible to improve the yield and the quality of the oil by using the decorticated cottonseed extraction process. In addition to its increasing use by the vanaspati industry, it has been gaining acceptance as an edible oil in recent years.

During the last three years, **soyabean** cultivation has made rapid progress. According to current estimates, the area under this crop has gone up from three lakh hectares in 1978-79 to 4.3 lakh hectares in 1979-80. It is estimated that this area can be raised to 10.5 lakh hectares by 1984-85, which could yield about two lakh tonnes of oil, and about four lakh tonnes of high quality protein. Even though the target appears ambitious, the experience of countries like Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Mexico and Thailand shows that in the initial years (1964-72), an almost 200 per cent increase in area took place. Soyabeans produce two to four times as much protein per unit area as pulses and grains and thus offer promise as the cheapest available source of high-quality protein.

The production of **coconut** is estimated at around 6000 million nuts. However, there has been a declining trend in productivity as a result of the failure to replant superior seedlings, over aged plantations, the menace of coconut 'root wilt' disease, sparse use of fertilisers and also, perhaps, indifferent agricultural practices. If planned targets with respect to coconut have to be met, then a part of this crop will have to be grown on a commercial plantation basis. Such an endeavour will require resources which are beyond small homestead gardens.

IV. POTENTIAL FOR RICE BRAN AND OIL PALM

I have selected Rice Bran and Oil Palm for a more detailed examination compared to the oilseeds discussed above in view of their very large potential. With the increase in rice production, oil from bran for both edible as well as non-edible purposes would increase substantially. And there is sufficient evidence from several countries to suggest that palm oil has long-term potential for increasing the availability of edible oils substantially.

1. Rice Bran

In 1980-81, the country produced about 150,000 tonnes of rice bran oil, most of it technical non-edible grade. Starting with a 500 tonnes in 1960, this represents impressive growth even though it is a fraction of the potential availability in the country. Nevertheless, as a result of the pioneering development of sophisticated indigenous technology at the Hindustan Lever Research Centre, it is today a major raw material in soap manufacturing and in turn has eliminated the dependence on imported tallow by large units and at the same time has helped conserve edible oils which otherwise would have been diverted to soap making.

The main reasons why rice bran oil (RBO) has not grown to its true potential are (a) the method of de-husking the paddy, and (b) the presence of the enzyme lipase which increases the free fatty acid content of the bran and renders the resultant oil unsuitable for edible purposes.

It is therefore of interest to examine ways of enhancing the availability of extractable bran and at the same time to review the status of edible RBO. Rice bran is obtained by de-husking paddy and polishing the resultant brown rice. The average quantity of bran removed during polishing is five per cent of the weight of paddy. Under the Rice Milling Industry (Regulation) Act, the Government has fixed the degree of polish. The percentage of bran that may be removed should not be more than five per cent or less than three per cent. The logic for this is that excessive removal of bran beyond five per cent divests the rice of its nutritive value. It is therefore appropriate to take a figure of five per cent of the paddy tonnage as the theoretical bran availability. This is equivalent to seven to 7.5 per cent on the weight of rice.

In order to obtain bran of extractable quality it is necessary to de-husk paddy first, separate the brown rice and then polish it. The two principal means of milling paddy are through the "huller" and "sheller" (including most rice mills). In a "huller", de-husking and polishing are done simultaneously. Hence, bran produced is a mixture of husk (23 per cent) and bran (four to eight per cent). In a "sheller", de-husking and polishing are done separately and it is only these mills that give a quality bran suitable for oil extraction.

On the basis of 55 million tonnes of paddy production and at 7.5 per cent polish, the theoretical availability of bran is approximately 40 lakh tonnes.

The estimated quantity processed, however, is only nine lakh tonnes. This is due to the fact that about 30 per cent of paddy is hand pounded and 35 per cent is milled by "huller"

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the 14 lakh tonnes produced by "shellers", only nine lakh tonnes have been processed, most has obviously gone into feeding poultry and cattle. If all the "sheller" bran was processed during 1980-81, instead of producing 60,000 tonnes of RBO, the country could have produced 200,000 tonnes of oil.

The potential of RBO for the year 1984-85 has been estimated in the Sixth Five Year Plan at 300,000 tonnes. Based on current experience this figure appears to be on the high side. However, if by 1985 the percentage of paddy milled in "shellers" can be raised to 65 per cent and all the available bran can be extracted, the production can rise to 285,000 tonnes.

Some of the obvious steps which need to be taken urgently are:

Hasten the modernisation of the rice mills through existing schemes and increase the pace of replacement of "hullers" by "shellers".

Re-examine procurement/levy policies in order to remove the competitive disadvantage and increase the availability of extractable quality bran ex "sheller" units.

Improve the effectiveness of the Food Corporation of India and the co-operative sector for marketing the bran to solvent extraction plants.

The problem of increasing the proportion of edible grade RBO of the total oil extracted needs to be tackled urgently. In 1980-81, of the 160,000 tonnes of RBO produced, only about 60,000 tonnes was of the edible variety. No method has been found upto now other than heat deactivation of lipase to stabilise the bran after milling. Parboiled paddy gives a higher yield of bran as compared to raw paddy, better quality in terms of oil content (22 per cent against 16 per cent in raw bran), and because of the stabilising effect of parboiling, more stable extracted oil. Of the total rice produced in the country, more than 50 per cent is parboiled. Unfortunately, very little parboiled bran is available for oil extraction because of the structure of the rice milling industry, and parboiling cannot become universal practice because it influences the taste of the rice.

Though a lot of work has been done in the country to develop a suitable and economical sheller, we are yet to develop designs which could be widely used in the rice mills. Recently, CFTRI reported a promising new method of deactivating lipase and stabilising rice bran using a simple, low-cost, extrusion cooker. However, this new technology needs to be tested under field conditions.

A heat-deactivation method for bran by, say, the use of agricultural waste, can be developed as a simple, low-cost unit process for use in the small rice-growing areas. Although this may be a practical short term solution, preliminary technical research indicates that eventually a simpler and more elegant chemical deactivation of lipase may be possible for widespread use. If we were to aim for a production of a modest 100,000 tonnes of edible rice bran oil by 1984-85, we could save Rs. 70 crores worth of foreign exchange per annum.

There is also need for a clear long-term policy on the export of de-oiled rice meal, crucial for the solvent-extraction economy. There is a limit to which the domestic market can absorb the extracted meal. Time and again it has been observed that once the local market needs have been met, the extraction stops since there is no ready outlet for additional meal. It is therefore necessary to encourage unrestricted exports in order to maximise oil recovery from rice bran since the economics of rice bran extraction are largely dependent upon realisation from de-oiled meal.

Encouraging exports of rice bran extractions has paid rich dividends in the past. Earnings from exports have gone up from Rs. 3.4 crores in 1974-75 to Rs. 32 crores in 1981-82. This could have gone up even further but for the ceiling on exports and the withdrawal of cash assistance. Moreover, capacity utilisation has gone down drastically. It is estimated that if restrictions on the exports of extraction are lifted, the country can save Rs. 100 crores by producing oil and earn a significant amount through the export of de-oiled rice bran.

The impression that the local poultry industry would be deprived of a valuable raw material has not been borne out by the recent experience of Andhra Pradesh, which is a leading state in poultry farming.

2. Oil Palm

Malaysia and palm oil have virtually become synonymous in the international oil trade. No discussion on edible oils can be complete without a description of what can only be termed as a stupendous achievement by this neighbouring country. As subsequent discussions will reveal, palm oil could make a major long-term contribution in bridging the gap between edible oils supply and demand.

a) Palm Oil & Malaysian Economy

Malaysia has been described as one of the miracle economies of South East Asia, with a growth rate of six per cent per annum in the 1960s, seven per cent in the first half of the 1970s and between 11 to 13 per cent from 1976 onwards. It has managed to keep inflation under five per cent with the agricultural sector providing the major springboard for its overall growth and with the emphasis given to palm. Malaysia, in the space of ten years, has become one of the three most important countries in the export of edible oils. This success is remarkable and impressive, not only in terms of palm oil production, but also the development of the whole sector. Malaysia has now established its own industrial structure in this sector to produce and market processed oil, a considerably more complex undertaking requiring not only production skills but also skill in marketing the more sophisticated products of the right quality.

The palm crop, which was first introduced to reduce the economic dependence on rubber, had a planted area of 130,000 acres in 1960. It now covers an area roughly spanning two million acres. It is the third largest planted crop after rubber and rice. Malaysian palm oil production increased from 1.6 million tonnes in 1977 to 2.5 million tonnes in 1980 and is expected to reach four million tonnes by 1985. Today, it accounts for 63 per cent of world palm oil production.

Yields per acre have also been increased by carefully selecting strains which give high yields of oil and planting the trees in commercial plantations. As the growth of acreage is likely to slow down in future years, the emphasis is to maximise yields from the existing lands. Research is concentrating on optimising fertiliser usage, pollination, field planting densities, and control of diseases, weeds and pests. Propagation by tissue culture, which could increase yields by 30 per cent is also progressing, and field trials with plants from tissues have reached fruit-bearing stage. Commercial planting is expected to commence in 1985.

Palm oil accounts for between nine and 12 per cent of Malaysia's export earnings. It exports close to 95 per cent of the palm oil it produces in various forms. This significant achievement has been possible largely as a result of the Malaysian Government's agricultural investment policies. While the private sector continues to play a vital role and accounts for a considerable share of the growth of the industry, a major force continues to be the Government. Malaysians who are landless or operate uneconomic farm units, are resettled as small holders by the Federal Land Development Authority. This was created in 1956 by the Government and has been funded by financial institutions and the World Bank. The policy, which has led to the development of a successful oil palm cultivation and processing industry, is giving employment and income to no less than one million people. It is a classic example of an agricultural activity thriving under proper organisation and planning. The Malaysian experience has relevance to the subject under discussion and its application to our country.

b) Planning for Palm Oil in India

Oil palm needs red loam soil and does not flourish in the sandy areas of the coastal zones. It grows well, climatically, in areas 10° North and South of the equator — with good humidity, mean annual temperature over 25°C and average minimum temperature not less than 18°C. It needs plenty of sunshine, and evenly distributed rainfall of 2000 mm — a drought lasting over a month has a limiting effect on yields.

Kerala considered medium-sized plantations in 1965, but due to pressure on land and other factors, the efforts did not yield the expected results. However, other areas which can be

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considered are the west coast of Karnataka, North and South Kanara Districts, and certain areas bordering Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Andaman & Nicobar Islands offer excellent and practically unlimited possibilities. Two pilot projects of small acreage in Kerala and in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands have been taken up by the Government, but their impact, even as demonstration units, has not received enough publicity.

To begin with, for a pilot project to have any discernible impact, it should cover at least between 20,000 and 30,000 acres. Though by itself this will not make a dent on the oil shortage situation, it will set the pace and provide the impetus for greater development. For larger acreage, it is suggested that the Government consider a joint venture with the private sector which has the requisite expertise and can provide management skills. The necessary finance can be obtained from local and international financial institutions.

In 1965, oil palm estate development cost per acre upto maturity (five years) was estimated at Rs.3800 in Kerala and Rs.5600 in the Andamans. Today it would be fair to estimate the cost for the Andamans at Rs. 12,000 per acre spread over a five year period. While it is true that oil palm is a highly capital-intensive crop with a relatively longer gestation period, this by itself should not deter the country from promoting a plantation industry. The major advantages of palm plantations are:

i) It is not a seasonal crop but is produced regularly all the year round.

ii) Oil palm is singularly free from pests and disease.

iii) Climatic conditions in certain parts of this country are similar to Malaysia and similar crop performance and productivity can be expected.

iv) Oil palm produces fruit regularly from five years to 30 years of age and continuity of supply is therefore reasonably ensured.

v) Because of modern growing and milling techniques, the quality of oil produced is uniform throughout.

Considering that an investment of Rs. 100 crores spread over a five-year period would start yielding annually oil valued at Rs. 80 crores and save foreign exchange, the case for pursuing this seriously cannot be overemphasised. If Malaysia has achieved the highest efficiency in output, cost and high yields, it is entirely due to scientific and research-oriented management of plantations by a very enterprising private sector with Government support.

CONCLUSIONS

In reviewing the problem of availability of edible oils and fats in the country, I have briefly surveyed some economic and nutritional aspects. The data on oilseeds production and the experience of the last few years indicate that while we should continue our efforts to achieve self-sufficiency, we should also consider the need for imports and what it will cost the country. Since the import of edible oils appears to be unavoidable in the forseeable future, ways of reducing its impact on the economy as well as on the long-term effort within the country should be considered with due care.

During the last ten years imports of edible oils have grown steadily. In financial terms it is currently equivalent to about ten per cent of the import bill for petroleum products. While exploration, conservation and substitution generate an air of hope and optimism on the mineral oil front, the same cannot be said for vegetable oils.

Apart from the adverse economic impact of edible oil shortages, the not-so-apparent nutritional consequences of poor consumption levels have much deeper and long-term consequences.

I believe that in the short-term some improvement in availability can and must come from frequently recommended practices such as better seeds, more extensive irrigation, and fuller utilisation of the increasing quantities of rice bran. Further, evolving a price support policy as well as one on the utilisation of imported edible oils which is in consonance with the strategy on pricing, would act as an incentive to sustain and improve indigenous production.

Oilseed production is now a national pr... Hence it is reasonable to expect that the ... to increase indigenous edible oil availabili... receive the much needed encourage... Even with moderate success in increasing ... output of groundnut, sunflower, soyabean ... cottonseed oil, alongwith some improve... in the availability of edible grade rice bra... imports can be reduced by 30 to 40 per cen... 1984-85 at the current levels of consump... In addition, if the recommendations made ... export of HPS groundnuts and extraction ... acceptance, this can meet the cost of the ... maining imports, substantially if not fully, b... end of the Sixth Five Year Plan.

For a longer-term strategy some other fac... need to be considered. The goal of ... sufficiency in edible oils needs to be vie... along with the larger national issue of optim... ing productivity in agricultural land use. In ad... tion, there is the fact that foreign exch... earnings from the export of certain agricultu... commodities have been showing encourag... growth, the methods of increasing these ha... as a possible source for financing edible ... imports, need to be examined. The role of ... organised palm oil industry has also to be ta... into account as part of such a strategy.

Finally, I believe that there is a need f... coordinating body to oversee the policies ... agricultural exports and oil imports, in the ... tional interest and keeping aside sectoral p... sures. An apex body constituted by the G... ernment as a single point recommendato... unit, along with the active participation of ... agricultural interests and the trade co... perform this function. If the short-term as w... the long-term strategy is clearly defined ... made the responsibility of such a body, w... likely to bring forth the quality of effort, ... nation and achievement which have been ... sing from the edible oil strategy of the co...

(NOTE: This does not purport to be a repo... the proceedings of the Annual General M... ing. Anyone wishing to have a copy of t... speech in booklet form, including charts, ... please write to: Communications Departm... Hindustan Lever Ltd., P.O. Box 409, Bom... 400 001.)

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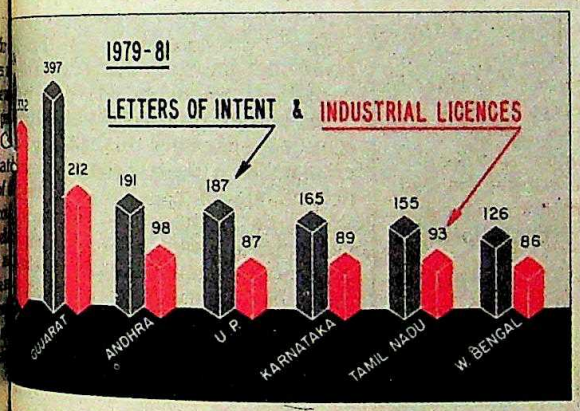
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MORE POWER TO INDUSTRY?

NO FEWER than eight large industrial houses have applied to the Government for setting up power plants of varying sizes going up to 500 MW. Among the applicants are the Tatas, Birlas, Singhanias, Modis and Thapars. Some of the applications say the plants are to generate captive power, but others are planned as public utility installations. The Government, though no more opposed in principle to allowing the private sector a role in power generation, nevertheless finds it difficult to give the green signal because the applicants say they will contribute no more than 6 per cent of total project costs. The rest will have to come from either the Government or the public sector financial institutions. The Energy Ministry is reluctant to cough up 94 per cent of the funds required and yet have no management control.

E OF THE EAST

T Bengal seems set to slide further down the ladder of dustrial rankings. Gujarat overtook it two years ago to e second most industrialised state (after Maharashtra), s probably just the beginning of the slide. The trends in f intent and industrial licences issued by the Central ent during the three years till 1981-end show that West nks only seventh in new industrial projects. Maharashtra arat are well in the lead, followed by Andhra Pradesh, desh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.



st Bengal's decline is a part of a broader problem encom- ll of eastern India. The 10 states and Union territories of ave dropped behind all the other zones in new industrial the leaders being the west zone (Maharashtra, Gujarat jasthan), followed by the south (Andhra Pradesh, Tamil arnataka, Kerala and Pondicherry). In terms of letters of ued between 1979 and 1981, even the north (320) and zone (298) are well ahead of the east (247). Equally dly, the western zone has got more letters of intent (942) in ce years than the northern, central and eastern zones put (865).

N'S TWO-WHEELED DRIVE

ER the virtual capture of the Indian market for cars and ial commercial vehicles, the Japanese are getting set to move e two-wheeler market as well. Suzuki Motor Company, has tied up with Maruti Udyog for producing cars, is now ng with the Madras-based TVS group for a new range of ered two-wheelers, while Honda is reportedly talking to Ludhiana-based Hero Cycles and the Pune-based manuf- of the Luna moped, the objective being to turn out a new scooters. The scooters will have engines of less than 100 cc (compared to Bajaj Auto's 150 cc), and are therefore designed to offer lower fuel consumption. Yamaha, the third major two-wheeler manufacturer in Japan, has already tied up with Escorts Ltd for producing a 350 cc motorcycle as well as lower-power two-wheelers. Yamaha will be first on the road, probably later this year, while TVS, Hero and Kinetic (makers of the Luna) will take time to tie up the contracts and get manufacturing operations ready.

FLOATING EXPORT

AN INDIAN company intends to make hovercraft—for export. The Allahabad-based Scientific Instrument Company has got official clearance for setting up a fully export-oriented factory at Ghaziabad to make two-seater hovercraft, in technical collaboration with Neoteric-USA-Inc. Scientific's Managing Director, D.N. Sinha, has told the Government he will manage exports of Rs 14.87 crore in the next five years, on a paltry investment of Rs 16.25 lakh. After 10 years, when the export obligation expires, Scientific may well be selling the hovercraft to Indian customers. Anyone willing to book now?

THE NIGHTMARE RETURNS

INFLATION is back. After falling steadily for seven months since August last year, the wholesale price index has risen equally steadily, and somewhat more sharply, through all of May and the first week of June, peaking at 282.1 on June 5, against 274.3 on April 24—a sharp increase of 2.8 per cent in just six weeks. This spurt has wiped out the price fall of more than six months, and the index is now at the highest level since last October.



The price rise has come just when the Government was congratulating itself on the Central budget having had no adverse impact on prices, and when a generally good rabi harvest should have dampened inflationary fevers. Yet much of the price rise has been in primary articles. Brows are now furrowed in the Finance Ministry because this new spurt in prices cannot be tackled by a fresh squeeze on money supply—since there is already a shortage of cash.

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FOREIGN AID

Asking For More

OLD IDEAS are like old shoes; they are so cosy you just cannot throw them away. Twenty-five years ago India officially approached the World Bank for aid for the first time and made foreign assistance one of the major inputs of its development programme. Nehru had then said that it would be a purely temporary feature and would be discontinued as soon as "we are able to stand on our own two feet". Last week, Finance Ministry officials returned from their annual pilgrimage to Paris—where World Bank consortium meetings are now held—with yet another pledge of aid worth $3,660 million (Rs 3,300 crore) in their pockets. While R.N. Malhotra the economic affairs secretary who headed the Indian team said he was highly satisfied with the outcome of the twenty-fifth meeting of the consortium—as well he might be—David Hopper, vice-president of the World Bank who chaired the meeting, paid a left-handed compliment: "I hope," he said, "there will be no need for a golden jubilee."

Foreign loans have become so much a part of India's development effort that there may be golden jubilees twice over by the time, in Nehru's words, "we are able to stand on our own two feet". Firstly, the borrowings are getting bigger and bigger and now offset a substantial slice of exports. Last year (1980–81), the aid commitment was nearly Rs 3,000 crore, which is more than 40 per cent of estimated exports (Rs 7,500 crore). Secondly, the increasing debt servicing charges—as much as 30 per cent—as a result of repayment of past loans and interest falling due every year eat heavily into the gross amount. In 1980–81, for instance, repayments on loans and special credits amounted to Rs 487 crore while another Rs 275 crore were paid as interest.

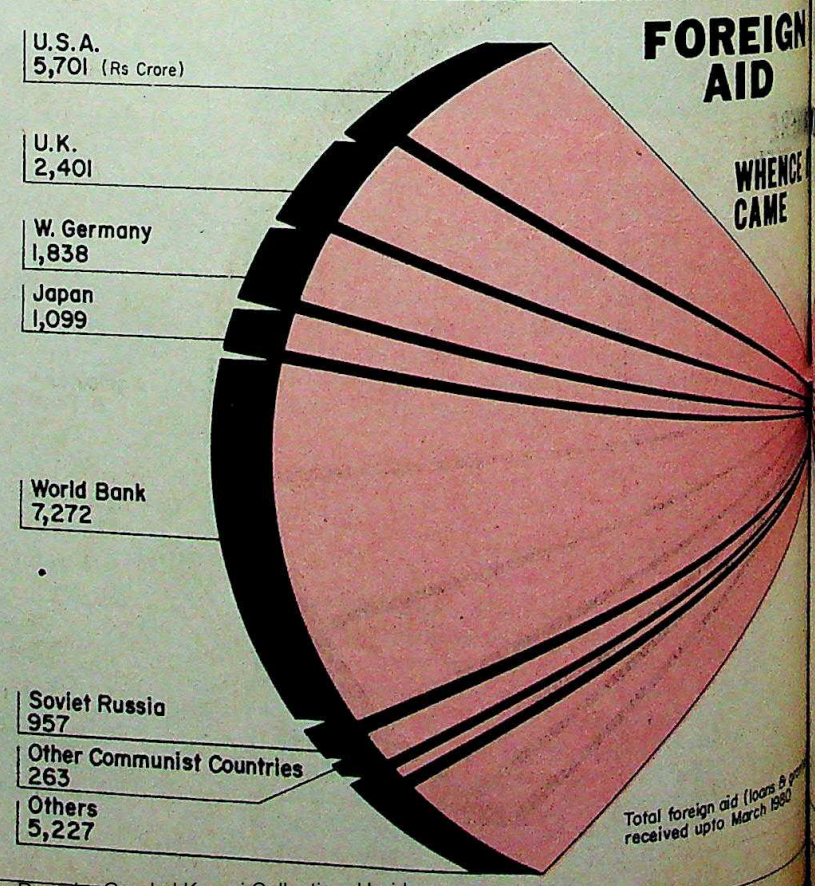
Heavy Borrowings: This is bound to increase this year since in addition to what are known as official loans (that is, government-to-government loans) India has become a substantial borrower on the international private capital markets where interest charges are close to 20 per cent. Last year, the commercial loans contracted came to over Rs 1,600 crore on which interest charges alone would amount to Rs 320 crore a year. And at the rate the Finance Ministry is encouraging borrowings abroad—the Daitari steel plant is another instance—the debt servicing charges might soon touch Rs 2,000 crore a year, which is as much as all of India's exports in 1972–73. India may soon be like that desperate man on the bicycle, pedalling away furiously but succeeding in just being stationary.

What has India done with all the money it has received so far? According to latest estimates, the total foreign assistance authorised (but not wholly utilised) up to 1979–80 was just under Rs 25,000 crore (Rs 24,757 crore to be exact) of which about 80 per cent had been utilised. The bulk of these loans (nearly Rs 20,000 crore) had been contracted since 1965–66, that is, during the last 15 years. Also, nearly Rs 20,000 crore worth of assistance came from the World Bank and the consortium countries and only a small amount (Rs 1,220 crore) from the USSR and its East European friends. Among the western countries, the United States led the field with Rs 5,701 crore, followed by Britain (Rs 2,401 crore), West Germany (Rs 1,838 crore) and Japan (Rs 1,099 crore). The International Development Association (IDA), the Bank's soft loan associate, pitched in with Rs 5,501 crore.

It is difficult to get precise statistics of what India has done with the mo... is obvious that most of it has been u... meeting trade deficits. Between 19... 1980–81—a long period of 30 ye... were only two years (1972–73 and ... when the balance of trade was ... favour. During the remaining 28 ... country piled up deficit on deficit ... little as Rs 80 crore in 1953-54 to a ... Rs 5,600 crore in 1980-81 (and pos... in 1981-82). The deficits added ... 14,100 crore by 1979-80. This m... three-quarters of the loan amount ... up in covering the trade deficits a... possibly in repayments. This giv... rough idea of the likely pattern of ... loans, for even the Government is ... clear about how exactly the mo... spent.

Aid Utilisation: Developing ... need a lot of help from abroad to m... their economies. Over the last 30 ye... has added enormously to its indus... ture and climbed up the internation... to become one of the top 10 i... powers in the world. It would be ... think that all this could have been ... without any assistance from the w... countries; and since money can ... thing, or nearly so, foreign loans h... legitimate input in the development.

This is also clear from the pa... loan use worked out by H.L. Bha...



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...s Foreign Aid Help?) prepared for ... Institute of Scientific Research. ... to Bhatia, industry (including ... mining) accounts for 58 per cent of ... and credits, the second largest ... being agriculture (17 per cent), ... transport (10 per cent), power (6 ... and oil and oil products (3 per ... non-agricultural sector thus ac... 84 per cent of the total aid, which ... the bulk of foreign loans and ... gone into the development of ... infrastructure—which is as ...

CONTRARY to popular impression, ... two-thirds of the money has ... into the public sector, and of ... per cent to industry. The remain... third was absorbed by the private ... industry in the private sector ... a bigger slice of foreign money ... in the public sector, the ratio ... roughly 55:45. The general im... therefore, that the bulk of the ... received through loans has ... to 'command the heights of the ... is apparently at variance with ... industry in India has profited ... loans and credits to a much ... than industry in the state ...

... that the national economy has more or less come of age and can fend for itself, would it be too much to expect that it will begin to pay its way on the external account, without the Government having to extend its begging bowl year in and year out? Unfortunately, there are no signs of such a thing happening. The foreign trade position has deteriorated to such an extent that while imports are growing at geometric rates, exports are more or less stationary. Imports doubled from Rs 6,000 crore in 1977–78 to Rs 12,330 crore in 1980–81 (and almost certainly Rs 13,500 crore, if not more in 1981–82), while exports have barely crept up from Rs 5,404 crore (in 1977–78) to Rs 6,704 crore (in 1980–81)—a rise of just 24 per cent in three years.

The trade gap for 1981–82 is estimated at Rs 6,000 crore, which is almost equal to the entire export earnings two years ago (1979–80). With such a quantum jump in imports, due mainly to high oil prices but also because of the so-called liberalised import licensing policy, the entire foreign trade system will soon go out of gear, if it has not already done so. Five years ago, the foreign trade deficit was about a third of the foreign exchange received through foreign loans and credits. Last year (1981–82) it was more than double. Foreign loans have now become an integral part of India's economy and the country is dependent on them to an extent undreamt of when they were first contracted.

Foreign loans, or aid, do not really solve the problem. India's exports as a proportion of national income are steadily coming down—from a high of 7.6 per cent in 1976–77 to 6 per cent in 1980–81. The Commerce Ministry—and the Planning Commission—habitually fix high targets, but they are rarely realised. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has now joined the targeting game by projecting a target of Rs 8,700 crore for 1982–83, roughly Rs 1,200 crore more than the actual last year. On paper the targets look fine: engineering products, Rs 1,350 crore; gems and jewellery, Rs 950 crore; ready-made garments, Rs 650 crore.

But exports even of this order would not make much of a dent in the total picture unless imports are brought nearer the export mark. Leaving imports as they are (around Rs 13,500 crore or so) would still leave a yawning gap in the trade balance of Rs 5,000 crore. India simply doesn't have the capacity to absorb such huge deficits year after year without something giving way—and that something can be anything from economic (mainly industrial) growth to exchange rates.

Compulsions: Industrial growth has already slackened—the latest estimate is 4 per cent against 8.1 per cent during 1981–82. The drop in the rate is said to be mainly because of the tight credit squeeze, although the Government denies this; but the credit squeeze itself is part of the Government's anti-inflationary measure and one of the conditionalities of the IMF loan agreement. So the link between the credit squeeze and the foreign exchange crisis is not all that far-fetched. A lower industrial growth rate generally slows everything down and makes for lower imports. This may therefore be one way of getting round the IMF's recommendations—or requirements—in regard to liberalisation of imports.

The exchange rate is a different kettle of fish altogether. In recent years, the IMF has considerably diluted its dogmatic approaches to the role of exchange rates and insists on rate adjustments only in the case of countries with chronic inflation problems. But things can change, not because of the IMF and others, but as a result of sheer internal compulsions. In about two years' time, when New Delhi has gone through the entire IMF loan, the chickens may come home to roost. Two years is, however, a long time and the Government can put the external account in order by taking a number of measures, including the tapping of non-resident Indians' funds which are estimated to be of the order of Rs 25,000 crore. But history has a way of repeating itself, as the historians say, no matter how dreaded the term 'devaluation' may sound. It may be 1966 all over again.

—JAY DUBASHI

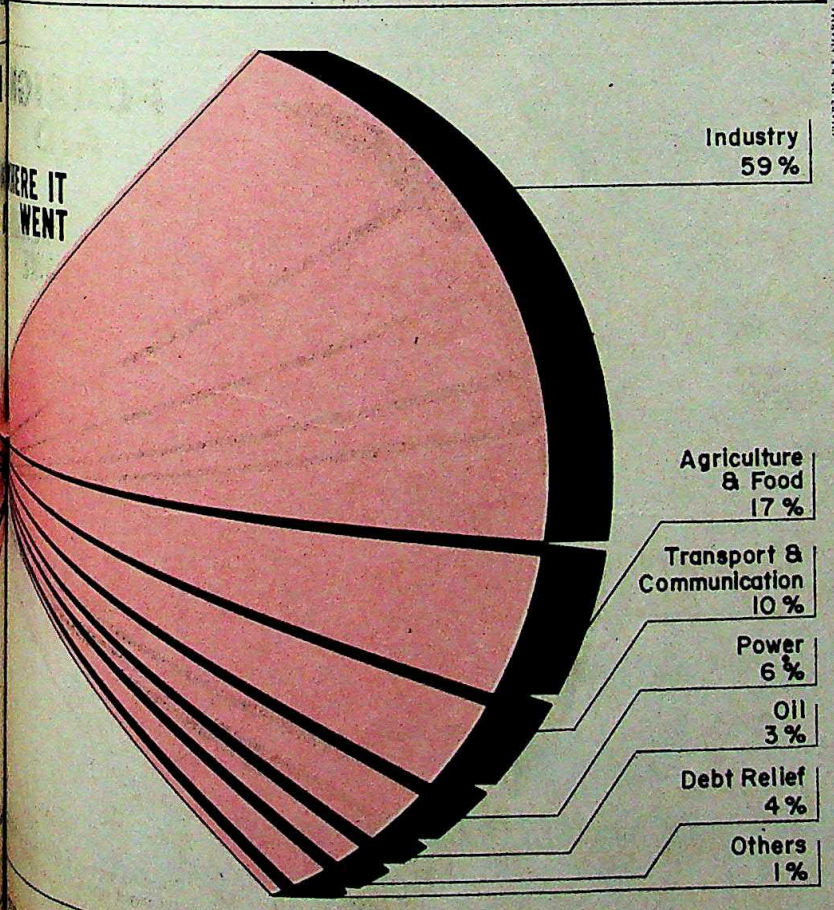


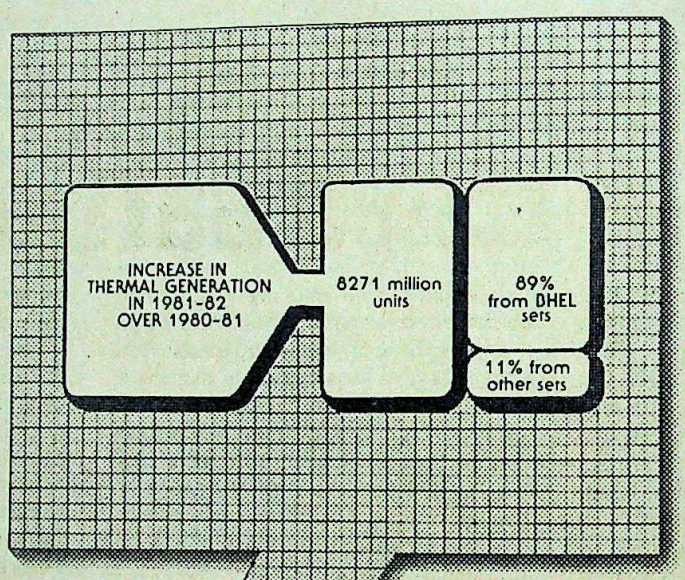
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RECORD INDUSTRY

A High Pitched Battle

WITH 10 hit records scheduled for release to music stores this fortnight, the US-based Columbia Broadcasting (CBS) recording company is planning ...ssive debut in the lucrative Indian ...Starting mid-July, the giant's Indian ..., CBS Gramophone Records and ...dia) will push up to 10 records each ...to a market dominated by the ...hone Company of India (GRAMCO) ...ic India, a subsidiary of Polygram. ...ds to enter the lucrative and, in its ...der-exploited field of ghazal music in ...o trying to crack into the GRAMCO-...ed area of film music. Asserted ...Kashinath Damley, the diminutive ...ng director of CBS (India): "There is a ...ential market in India which our ...ors have missed out on. Now that ...n, we intend to carve ourselves a ...ial chunk of this market."

...CBS challenge comes at a time when ...an music market-place is booming. ...sion to GRAMCO, a subsidiary of ...an famous for the His Master's ...ary) brand-name, and Music India ...sells Polydor records, a profusion of ...music producers has mushroomed in ...years. Specialised labels which service ...regional areas, vernacular music, ...onal bhajans and geets, and even ...el music have sprung up around the ... In Calcutta alone at least three ...ng companies, Megaphone, Ghatani ...Saroka, have developed their own st... ...of local Bengali musicians whom they ...ly release on record and cassette. AVM ...ds in Madras, Mayur in Varanasi, ...al Melodies and Movac in Bombay, and a string of companies in Gujarat, Punjab and other states have set up shop as purveyors of local or specialised music. India Book House, a Bombay book distribution outfit, has launched a cassette division, Amarnad. Alfred Rose releases up to five records a year of Goan and Konkani music. And an independent concern in Madhya Pradesh churns out Chhattisgarhi music.

The growth in music sales has been spectacular. Officially, the market for recorded music has grown from roughly Rs 3 crore in 1970 when Polygram first invaded the GRAMCO stronghold, to over Rs 23 crore last year. Sales of Music India and GRAMCO which account for 91 per cent of the market, were 21 per cent higher in 1981-82 than in the previous year, and the newly discovered market in cassettes boomed at a rate of over 150 per cent each year.

Impressive Growth: The growth in music hardware, the industry term for cassette- and record-players, has been equally great. Annually, 1.25 lakh record-players are manufactured in the country, and GRAMCO Marketing Manager P.K. Bannerji estimates cassette-recorder manufacture at 7.5 lakh. The number of additional cassette-players brought in by the country's five lakh migrant workers and the smuggled goods market is anybody's guess. Said Bannerji: "We estimate that roughly six lakh record-player owners actively buy records each year, but there are at least 10 times this number of cassette-players in the country today, and that market continues to grow rapidly."

But official figures of growth in the industry barely scratch the surface. The cassette boom has led to such widespread piracy of recorded music that industrymen estimate that cut-price pirate versions now cater to more than half of the true music market. Of the 20 million blank cassettes sold in the country last year, up to 15 million could have been used for pirate recordings, and this market continues to grow by an estimated 35 to 40 per cent each year. In a belated bid to combat the menace, record companies got together last year to set up a Delhi-based anti-piracy cell to collect information, investigate, and eventually prod government agencies and the police into action against the music pirates.

Notwithstanding the substantial dilution of revenues by piracy, CBS will be entering a market which has shown greater sales potential than was earlier thought possible. In 1973, the sound-track of Raj Kapoor's *Bobby* broke records when its sales crossed the one lakh mark, known in the industry as a gold disc. *Sholay*, two years after it was released in 1975, scraped past two lakh copies to set a record as the first platinum disc. Since then, however, record industry majors have sold more than 23 gold discs and 10 platinums, including Music India's *Qurbani*, which crossed the platinum mark in just seven months. More importantly, Nazia Hasan's *Disco Deewane* last year broke the popular industry myth that only film sound-tracks sell when sales of the non-film record shot past four lakh to make a double platinum.

Diversified Buying: "There is a much greater effort now to sell records within a tight time frame," explained Bannerji. "As a result, even a flop record tends to sell 50 per cent more than it did five years ago, while in the case of a super hit we achieve sales that are at least 250 to 300 per cent greater than in

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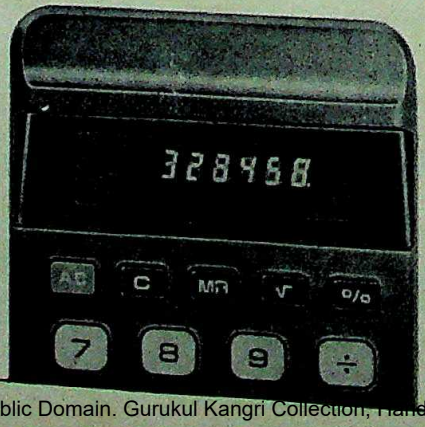
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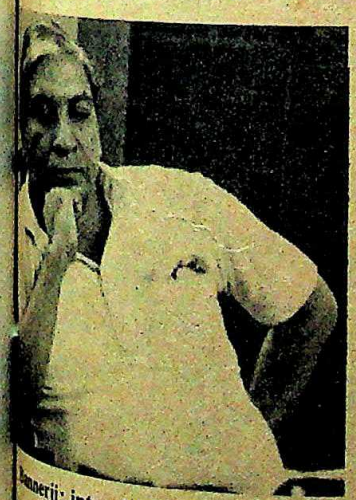




Lazarus (left) and Damley: cashing in on the boom

...dded V.J.Lazarus, vice-president of ...dia: "Sales have spurted in part ...today for the first time we have a ...er buyer. The hard core film music ...as started to buy some international ...like Boney M and Abba, and another ...of film song lovers will go in for the ...cal singers who are light and ac... Our buyers are no longer as tightly ...ed as they were, and this has pushed

...king in while the sales boom lasts, ...mpanies in the country have be...easingly sophisticated in their mar...hods. GRAMCO's publicity budgets ...from 2.5 per cent of their turnover ...ago to 5 per cent of last year's vastly ...turnover. The publicity for a pot... is sometimes staggeringly large. ...r, the company pumped in almost



...manerji: intensive marketing

...s on promoting a single record out of ...logue of 260—*Disco Deewane*. ...sive marketing efforts by both ... and Music India have grown to ...larger retailer discounts for disco ...huge press publicity campaigns, ...wards to retailers who effectively ...particular record, and extravagant public shows, concerts, and ghazal recitals. Explained GRAMCO's Western Region Manager Saibal Sen: "We've begun to realise that our country's much larger than what we had earlier assumed, and today we set our sights much higher. Our marketing efforts have become more aggressive than ever."

Intense Competition: Even more intense is the competition at the artiste or film producer level, with the major companies vying with each other to grab every potential seller. Hindi film music still accounts for over 55 per cent record industry sales, and much of this figure comes from barely 20 sound-tracks of the 100 released in a year. The race to sign on big-name producers, as a result, has assumed almost cutthroat proportions. Among the incentives offered to producers figure especially designed fold-out record jackets, hyped-up publicity on inflated budgets, and advances on royalty payments.

The bidding sometimes reaches absurd levels. Nasir Hussein, producer of a string of hits like *Yadon Ki Baraat* and *Hum Kisi Se Kum Nahin*, reportedly played GRAMCO and Music India off against each other till he was offered an advance of Rs 11 lakh against future royalty payments. To merely recover the advanced amount, Music India needed to sell three lakh albums of his *Zamaane Ko Dikhana Hai*, which in fact turned out to be the biggest flop of last year. The list of similar casualties has been mounting. INRECO, a Calcutta-based record company with its own plant and annual sales of Rs 1 crore was forced out of the sound-track business because it could not match the sometimes reckless bidding, and today it restricts itself to regional, devotional, and non-filmi music.

Although CBS (India) is backed by the most successful rock catalogue in the world today, success for the company will hinge on the degree to which it can break the GRAMCO-Music India monopoly on film music. International repertoires make up only 15 per cent of the Indian market, and most of the remaining 85 per cent comes from the 100 Hindi films and 650 regional films made each year. By last fortnight, CBS (India) had lined up at least one artiste for a ghazal record and was negotiating with six producers for their sound-tracks. If the Indian subsidiary is only half as aggressive as its parent company was when it invaded EMI's British stronghold, the established record industry in India is in for some hard times.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

DVC

The Lessons Of Luthar

TWO YEARS ago, the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) symbolised those mismanaged public sector projects that seemingly exist only for giving their armies of employees a living. Today, the DVC is an example of what can be done with these public sector behemoths, given a determined man at the helm.

When Prem Chandra Luthar was appointed chairman of the DVC in August 1980, he brought with him the reputation of being a tough manager who had already turned around another sick public sector giant, the Mining and Allied Machinery Corporation (MAMC). But there were many who feared that in the DVC he would only make matters worse by trying to bulldoze recalcitrant employees in a Marxist-dominated state.

There are no doubting Thomases around any more. The DVC today tops the list of public sector electricity generating bodies with 54 per cent utilisation of its 157 MW capacity, well ahead of the 47.7 per cent national average, and even further ahead of its own earlier level of less than 40 per cent. Generation shot up 34 per cent last year, to 6 billion units (up from 4.5 billion in 1980-81), while generation at the three thermal units is up 40 per cent to 5.8 billion units. Profits are

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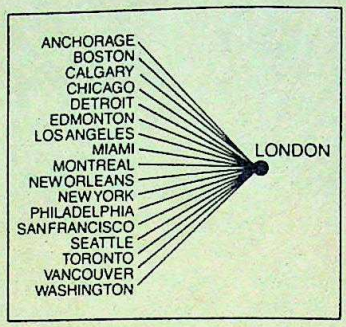
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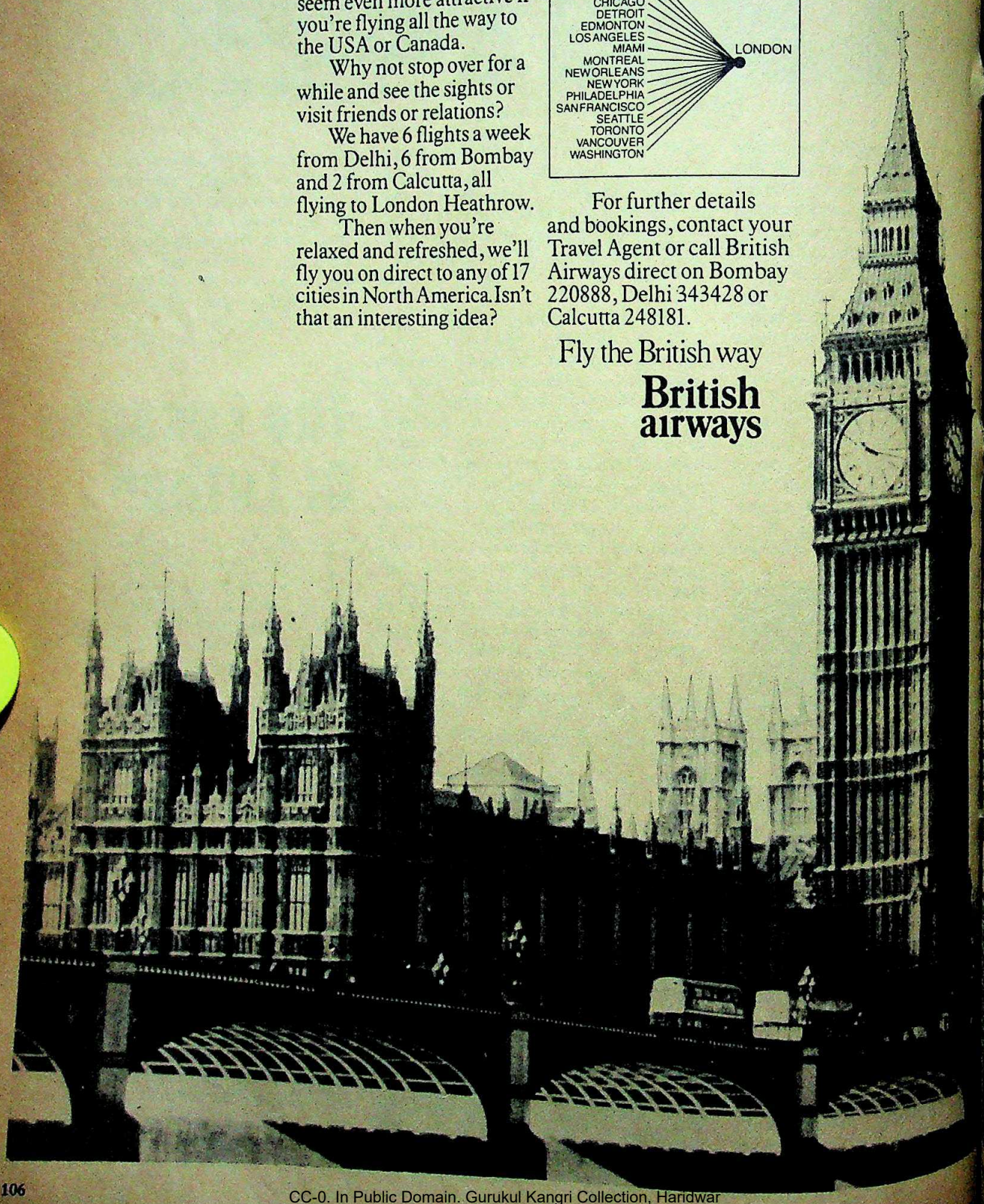
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...from a little over Rs 5 crore in ... Rs 25 crore last year, and in ... grateful government rewarded 56-...Luthar with a Padma Shri.

...Advised: Luthar ascribes this ...s success to rapid-fire operations ...e 20-odd workers unions and staff ...ses which had destroyed even the semblance of discipline in DVC offices and generating plants. The offensive against the unions earned the open displeasure of West Bengal's Left Front Government, and even the Union Energy Minister, A.B.A. Ghani Khan Choudhury, advised caution. Luthar himself was physically assaulted outside his office, in Calcutta's Bhabani Bhavan, and briefly hospitalised.

But nothing would deter Luthar, who told INDIA TODAY last fortnight: "I had a job to do. When I was appointed, I was told by the highest authority in the country that I must achieve a generation of 500 MW. And as soon as I took charge, I realised I would not be able to function without taming the

...VISION

...sadvantage ...ritraj

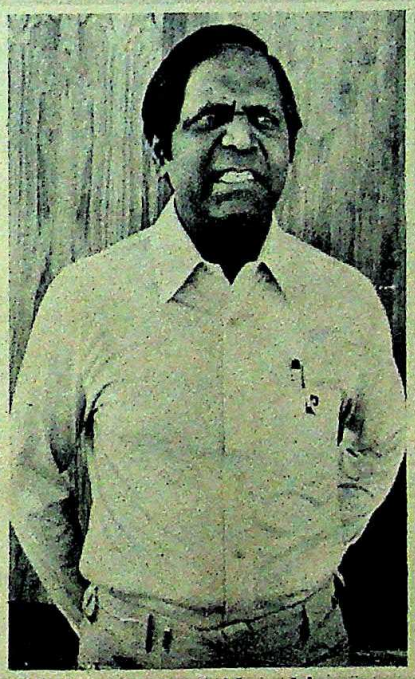
...COULD serve as a classic lesson in ...e dangers of promoting export-...ented ventures. The market see-...large, the potential enormous, and ...prospects exciting. But by the time ...t Vision was able to establish ...'s largest television set factory at ..., near Madras, for exporting one ...12-inch black and white sets to the ...d States every year, the bright hopes ...flickering screen had given way to a ...d whirl of problems.

The project was launched by Robert ...raj (father of tennis player Vijay), ...worked out a tie-up with Opel ...s of the US. The deal included the ... of technology as well as a buy-... arrangement that would help ...raj break into the world's biggest ...most prestigious TV market.

The other partner in the project was ...public sector Electronics Trade and ...nology Development Corporation ...), which took up a part of the share ...l. The ETTDC saw the venture as the ... in a series that would launch India ... truly large-scale manufacture of TV ... that meet international standards. ...ultaneous export thrust was plan-... achieve the kind of export-oriented ...onics revolution brought about in ... like South Korea, Taiwan, Hong ... and Singapore. Orient Vision, from ... point of view, was a trial balloon ... to test whether India's electronics ...try could at last take off.

...Problems Begin: The factory came ...without difficulty, with a capacity to ...ble 1.5 lakh sets annually on single-... operations. But that was when the ...ess began, and before you could ...Walter Cronkite the entire basis for ...ject had been swept away. First, ... Vision's sets were not able to get ...technical imprimatur of the ...writers Laboratory, a non-...ent US organisation which has ...any TV set before it can be sold ... US, and second, prices on the American TV market crashed to $48 (Rs 432) for 12-inch sets, well below Orient's manufacturings cost of $60 (Rs 540) per set.

The company has been able to turn out just 5,000 sets so far, of which only 1,000 (less than three days' production) have been sold abroad—at a loss per set of $10 (Rs 90). Sensing a scandal two months ago, Parliament's committee on public undertakings came down heavily on the ETTDC for the "casual manner" in which it had taken up the project, and called for a formal inquiry by the Government. The ETTDC has sunk more than Rs 1.1 crore in Orient Vision, including the import of Rs 70 lakh worth of components which lie unused and for which, according to the committee, Amritraj has refused to accept liability.



Robert Amritraj: blurred images

Despite the problems, both Amritraj and the ETTDC refuse to admit defeat. Amritraj argued last fortnight that exports at even $50 (Rs 450) per set would be worthwhile because he would get a 15 per cent export subsidy, and that a team from the Underwriters Laboratory would be visiting the factory prior to giving technical approval. He said the search was also on for other, more lucrative markets: 18,000 sets are to go to Mexico. The ETTDC says trial consignments are also to be sent to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, while the possibilities of tapping the European market are being explored.

Fresh Plans: The ETTDC, meanwhile, is attempting to radically transform the whole project. The corporation intends to buy out Amritraj and become the majority shareholder—though Amritraj will continue to keep minority shareholding and perhaps retain management control. Amritraj may go along because his sons are unlikely to want to do business in India, and are in any case doing better in the US with a movie producing enterprise.

The second step will be to convert the wholly export-oriented project into one that will direct sales primarily at the home market, provided the Government gives permission. Said C.G. Subramanyan, technical director of the ETTDC: "We have no option but to sell the sets domestically in order to make profits that will neutralise the losses on exports." Subramanyan hopes that one lakh sets sold domestically every year can pay for the losses on 50,000 sets exported.

The big question now is whether the Government will, or should, allow domestic market entry for a unit that was allowed to come up on the promise of 100 per cent exports. Subramanyan claims that government permission will help Orient offer TV sets at low prices (less than Rs 1,800), and that the alternative may well be to close the unit down.

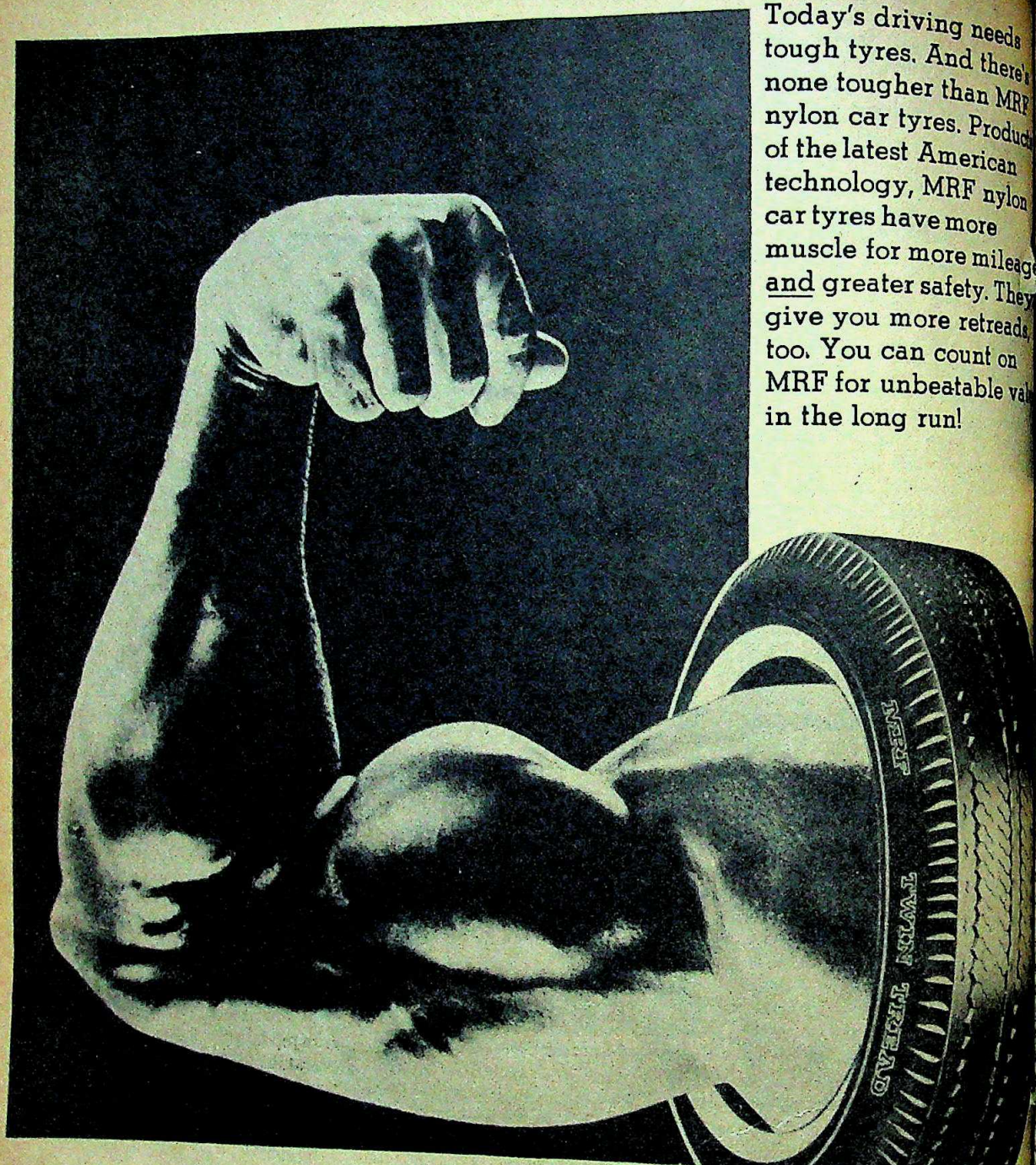
On the other hand, free domestic market entry for an export unit will set a precedent that other supposedly 100 per cent export ventures can cite later while asking for similar concessions. With over 130 export-oriented ventures now coming up across the country, does the Government want to set such a precedent, or make an example of Orient Vision? One straw in the wind last fortnight was the proposal under consideration to allow Orient to assemble 20,000 colour TV sets on behalf of the ETTDC, to be sold to Asiad viewers.

—T.N. NINAN with RAJ CHENGAPPA

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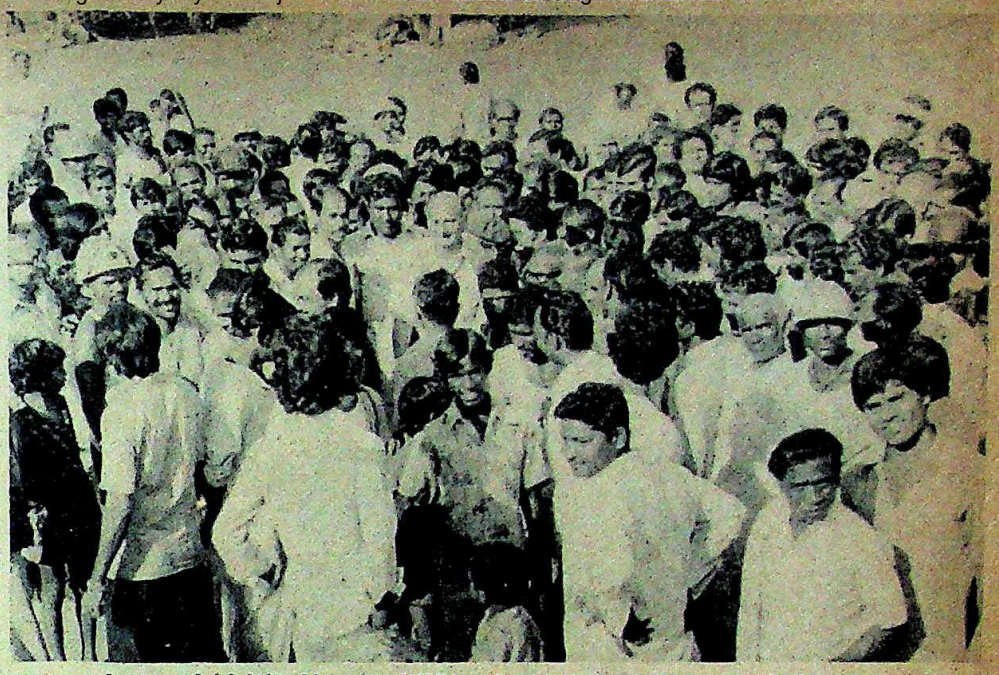
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Luthar at the Chandrapur power plant; and (right) addressing DVC workers: direct approach methods

...ent about my task, and today we ...ing 700 MW around the clock."
...ther one agrees or not with Luthar ...g the unions is responsible for his ...cord, there is no denying that the ...quarters in Calcutta today has a ...ly look about it. There are no ... the corridors, and most of the ... are manned. Even leaders of the ...ted DVC staff association, with ...har has had a direct confron... that there is greater discipline ...eir argument, however, is that ...annot be brow-beaten for too ...nt on which Luthar disagrees: "I ...row-beaten anybody. By my direct ...methods I have been able to inject ...participation in the employees. ...ing dividends in the plants."

Communication: The direct ap... consists largely of a regular stream of ...league" letters to all employees, ... with their pay packets. Luthar ...e letters as a top priority item: "I ... importance to these bridges of ...nications, which help develop a feel... *esprit de corps*." A typical letter in ...s year referred to the record gene... 535 million units in March, against ...ous best of 488 million units in 1978, ...es on to exhort: "Credit for this ...ent goes to DVC's eagles who re... no limit to the height they can attain. ...eagles soar higher and higher."

...e epistles (in English, Hindi and ... coupled with such no-nonsense ...ve a quick pulling up of men at the ...ere lapses ("They know that any ...violation will bring a three-month ...and the appointment of a battery of ...welfare inspectors for the quick redressal of grievances have, by all accounts, worked wonders at the plants, located in both West Bengal and Bihar.

The figures tell their own story. In 1980 till June 15, the total generation of power by the DVC was 1,902 million units. This went up to 2,521 million units in the corresponding period of 1981, and till June 15 this year rose further to 2,657 million units. Thermal generation in 1981-82 was 40 per cent more than in the previous year, and the current 54 per cent capacity utilisation marks an increase of 63 per cent over the previous 18 months.

Sharp Improvements: Today's capacity utilisation appears even more impressive when compared to the 37.6 per cent capacity utilisation achieved by the West Bengal State Electricity Board and Durgapur Projects Ltd (also run by the state Government). Power consuming industries in the Damodar valley industrial belt—taking in steel plants, coalmines and heavy engineering outfits—would not have been able to register the sharp improvements they have over the past year if Luthar had not worked his minor miracle at the DVC. A series of downstream consumers of coal and steel have similarly benefited as a result. Even the easier power supply situation in Calcutta last fortnight was largely attributable to the unrestricted supply from the corporation's generating plants.

The lesson now seems to have finally gone home. Though the state Government has on numerous occasions publicly condemned Luthar for his staff policies, Luthar claims that in private conversations he has always found Chief Minister Jyoti Basu understanding and highly appreciative. Now the Marxists even seem to be taking a leaf out of Luthar's book: last fortnight five workers of the Gouripur power plants were suspended even though they owe allegiance to the Marxist-controlled Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU). The message sent out is that the Government is no longer prepared to tolerate indiscipline in its power stations.

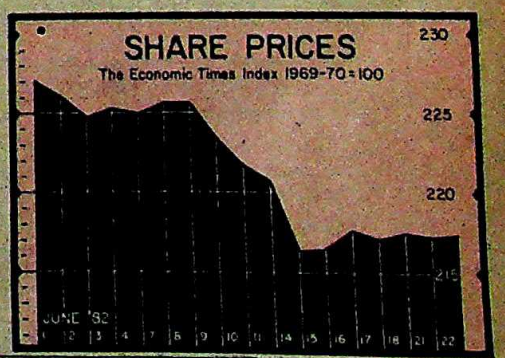
—SUMANTA SEN

THE MARKETS

Fickle Behaviour

IT IS not true that the stock market is about to crash—it has already very nearly crashed. It hit rock-bottom last week when the *Economic Times* index touched 217, nearly 15 per cent down from the year's high reached around the budget time. It shows how fickle the market behaviour has been this year, but it can work both ways. Another high in three or four months' time cannot be entirely ruled out.

There is after all a limit to what a market can put up with and it has really put up with a great deal—credit squeeze, recession, textile strike, inflation, all after one another. Unless there is a let-up in at least one of these things, the immediate outlook would appear to be gloomy. The credit squeeze and the recession are long-term problems and it is unlikely that the authorities will relent so quickly. A break



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...ACTIVE STOCKS

Low		Close 18.6.82	Change on Fortnight
34.00	Ashok Leyland	34.50	– 1.60
212.50	Associated Cement	283.50	– 29.00
48.00	Atlas Copco	55.00	– 4.50
1,250.00	Bajaj Auto	1,435.00	– 55.00
36.00	Ballarpur	36.80	0.40
352.00	Baroda Rayon	368.00	– 14.00
26.50	Bharat Gears	27.00	– 4.50
26.80	Birla Jute	29.50	– 0.50
53.00	Blow Plast	59.50	nil
13.50	Bombay Dyeing	62.50	– 6.00
16.44	British Paints	18.19	nil
20.20	Brooke Bond	21.65	0.40
15.40	Calcutta Electric	15.50	– 0.25
223.00	Calico Mills	233.00	– 24.50
177.50	Ceat Tyres	195.00	5.00
965.00	Century Spinning	970.00	– 30.50
18.50	Chemicals & Fibres	18.50	– 1.00
80.00	Colgate	82.50	– 6.50
41.50	Chloride India	42.00	nil
12.05	Crescent Dyes	12.10	nil
31.31	Delhi Cloth Mills	31.31	– 2.19
18.30	Dunlop India	19.20	0.90
16.50	East India Hotels	17.50	0.25
28.00	Elecon	28.00	nil
34.25	Escorts	35.62	nil
35.75	Food Specialities	43.00	– 3.25
38.00	Garware Nylon	40.50	– 3.00
25.40	General Electric	26.30	– 0.05
31.00	Guest Keen Williams	31.00	– 0.40
384.00	Gujarat Fertilisers	393.00	9.00
30.30	Hindustan Aluminium	30.60	– 0.65
48.00	Hindustan Lever	49.00	– 0.50
21.82	Hindustan Motors	22.48	0.25
23.50	Hoechst Dyes	23.50	– 0.50
17.10	Indian Aluminium	17.10	– 0.90
18.90	Indian Cable	19.40	0.15
175.50	Indian Dyestuff	180.00	– 5.00
20.25	Indian Explosives	20.40	– 1.20
50.00	Indian Hotels	51.00	– 5.00
26.00	Indian Organic	29.00	1.00
26.20	Indian Oxygen	26.35	0.15
125.00	Ingersoll-Rand	141.00	7.00
30.00	Ion Exchange	30.00	– 1.50
21.00	ITC	27.70	0.50
28.75	Jayshree Tea	29.80	0.55
55.60	J.K. Synthetics	56.10	– 3.60
45.10	Kesoram	46.80	– 0.30
115.00	Kinetic Engineering	125.00	2.00
20.00	Kothari (Madras)	22.75	1.75
45.50	Larsen & Toubro	46.50	– 5.75
14.50	Madura Coats	14.50	– 0.60
39.00	Mahindra & Mahindra	40.50	– 2.50
11.50	Metal Box	11.70	– 0.05
22.50	Mukand Iron	23.25	– 0.50
172.00	National Organic	172.00	– 8.00
33.50	Nirlon	34.00	– 2.00
34.50	Orient Paper	36.20	0.90
27.00	Peico Electronics	27.50	– 0.25
59.00	Ponds India	61.00	– 2.00
293.00	Premier Auto	313.00	– 21.00
21.00	Ranbaxy	25.00	– 0.25
35.00	Raymond	35.50	0.50
141.00	Reliance	147.00	– 5.00
27.30	Shaw Wallace	27.60	0.20
34.00	Siemens	34.00	– 3.25
41.37	Shriram Fibres	41.81	– 3.75
12.75	SPIC	13.00	0.25
19.00	Sylvania & Laxman	19.50	0.25
45.50	Tata Chemicals	50.00	– 1.50
369.00	Tata Steel	391.00	– 20.00
404.00	TELCO	442.00	– 37.00
36.75	Texmaco	38.25	– 1.55
24.00	Union Carbide	24.10	– 0.15
25.25	Usha Martin Black	25.80	0.20
229.00	Voltas	236.00	nil
19.40	Zuari Agro	19.10	– 0.15

on the textile strike front might be just the pale silver lining the market is waiting for, but that too seems unlikely.

The corporate news continues to be cheerful—Ingersoll-Rand, the compressor people, has announced a 1 for 1 bonus. Tata Steel is reported to have done much better this year—which is incidentally their platinum jubilee year—with sales up by nearly 35 per cent, from Rs 500 crore to Rs 680 crore. A better-than-average dividend is now expected and this might bring in some cheer, despite the fact that the other large Tata company, TELCO, is caught in the credit squeeze, along with other truck companies, and is not doing so well.

Brave Front: Although the market as a whole is apparently in the dumps, some scrips are still putting on a brave front. ITC seems to be in top form and so is Shaw Wallace. Chloride India, the battery company, has moved in a narrow groove and is quite close to the year's high. These shares are worth watching, for the same reason that fish that swim against the tide are worth watching.

The average investor may feel like giving up the ghost but he would be wrong. This is precisely the time when he should keep his head and look for some attractive bargains. The credit squeeze has squeezed out a lot of fat from some scrips and they have a leaner, and therefore, more attractive look. Ashok Leyland, TELCO and Mahindra & Mahindra come to mind easily. The Kothari group in the south which tends to be neglected north of the Vindhyas should also make a good addition to a diversified portfolio. The group is expanding rapidly into electronics—a rights issue from their electronics company is on the cards—and has a number of other schemes up its sleeve.

Another way of picking up scrips of good companies at par or very close to par is to go in for convertible debentures, keep the equity shares after conversion and then get rid of the debentures. The whole exercise has to be carefully worked out, particularly from the tax angle, but if one can pick up a share at par and pay a small amount for the loss on the debenture transaction, it would be worth it. Quite a few such issues are now in the pipeline, including Gwalior Rayon and Guest Keen Williams, which should give the investor a good—and safe—spread for his risk.

In any case, things are going to the pretty tight until about Diwali or thereabouts after which they might begin to look up. The best bet—long-term, that is—is to go in for companies with big expansion programmes even if they are not doing so well at the moment. One can hope for a bigger slice of the cake only when the cake is growing.

WORLD VALUE OF RUPEE

Country	Currency and Unit		TT Selling Rates (Rs)	TT Buying Rates (Rs)
Australia	As $	1	9.9041	9.7993
Austria	As Sch	100	55.2836	54.6956
Bahrain	Dinar	1	24.9161	24.7337
Bangladesh	Taka	100	43.8394	43.5184
Canada	Can $	1	7.4255	7.3453
Egypt	Egp £	1	11.3301	11.2471
France	Fr Frc	1	1.4067	1.3904
Hong Kong	HK $	1	1.6241	1.6078
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	1.4318	1.4213
Iran	Rial	100	11.4266	11.3429
Italy	It Lira	100	0.6982	0.6904
Japan	Jap Yen	100	3.7566	3.7127
Kenya	K Shilling	1	0.8837	0.8772
Kuwait	Dinar	1	32.5866	32.3470
Malaysia	Ml $	1	4.0730	4.0442
Mauritius	Rupee	1	0.8745	0.8650
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.7105	0.7053
Netherlands	D Glds	1	3.5390	3.5005
Pakistan	Rupee	1	0.8179	0.8119
Singapore	Sing $	1	4.4635	4.4167
Spain	Sp Pt	100	8.6690	8.5736
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	0.4562	0.4529
Sweden	Sw Kr	1	1.5722	1.5549
Switzerland	Sw Frc	1	4.5319	4.4434
Tanzania	T Sch	1	1.0193	1.0119
Thailand	Baht	100	41.00	41.00
UK	Pound	1	16.6954	16.4962
USA	US $	1	9.6250	9.4925
UAE	Dihram	1	2.5509	2.5322
USSR	Rouble	1	13.0363	12.9408
W. Germany	DM	1	3.9062	3.8022

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo Ltd., New Delhi and quoted between the Banks on 22–6–1982.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

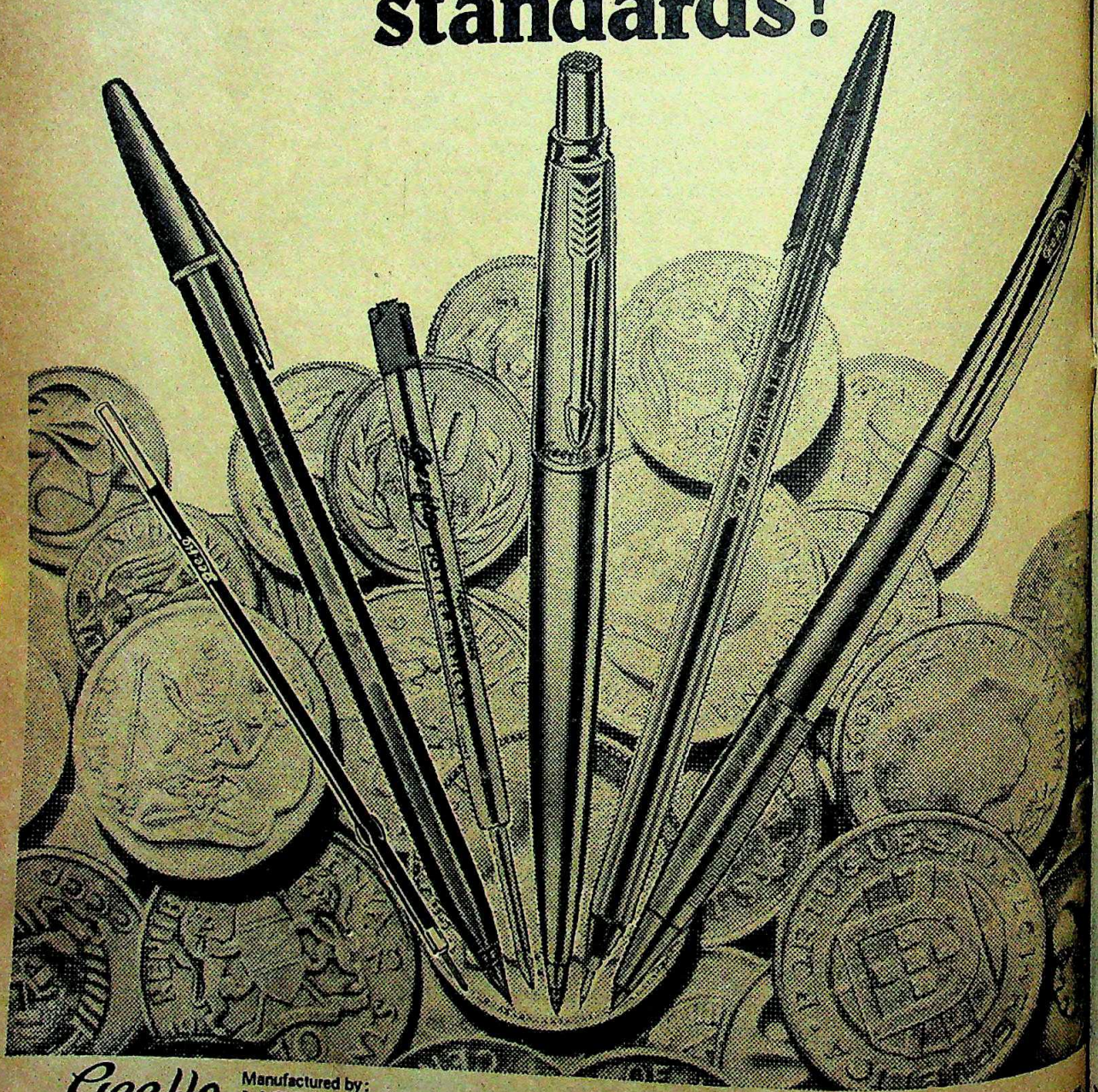
	Latest	Change on month
PRICES		
ET Commodity Price Index, June 18 (1969–70 = 100)	243.9	6.8
Cereals	231.6	0.7
Chemicals	278.0	– 0.8
Industrial Fibres	181.5	13.7
Metals	330.0	– 1.6
Sugar	226.9	8.7
Textile Yarns	220.6	– 0.6
Vegetable Oils	276.9	13.2
Gold, standard, June 18 (Rs per 10 gm)	1,665.00	– 85.00
Silver, .999, June 18 (Rs per kg)	2,605.00	– 75.00
SHARES		
ET Share Price Index, June 17 (1969–70 = 100)	217.8	– 11.8
Cement	133.8	– 9.3
Chemicals	177.9	– 1.2
Engineering	354.1	– 20.5
Fertilisers	175.8	– 10.7
Man-made Fibres	434.6	– 30.4
Paper	410.1	– 28.0
Rubber Goods	124.4	– 10.6
MONEY		(per cent)
Money Supply, May 7		1.4
Bank Deposits		0.9
Foreign Exchange Assets		1.0

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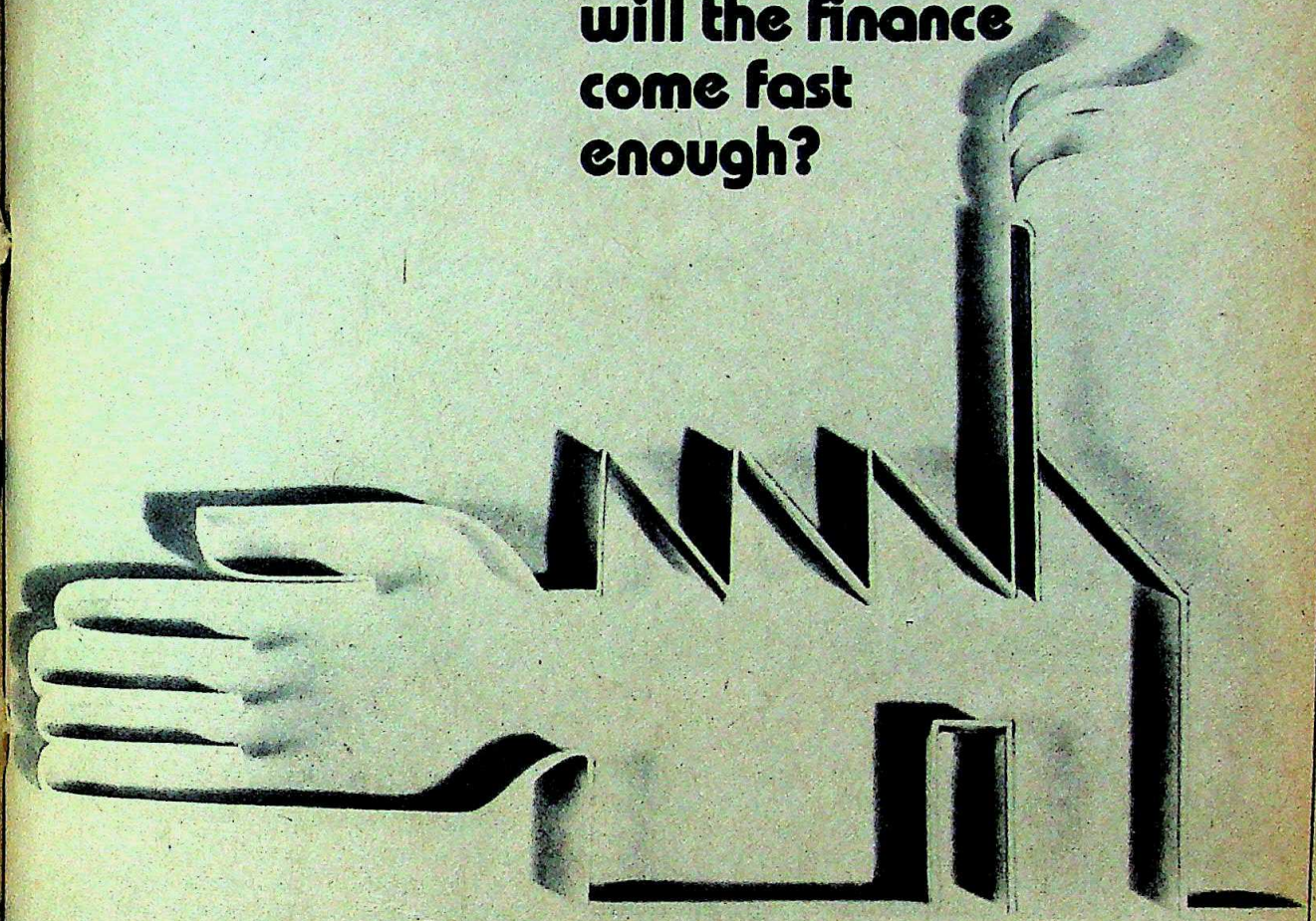


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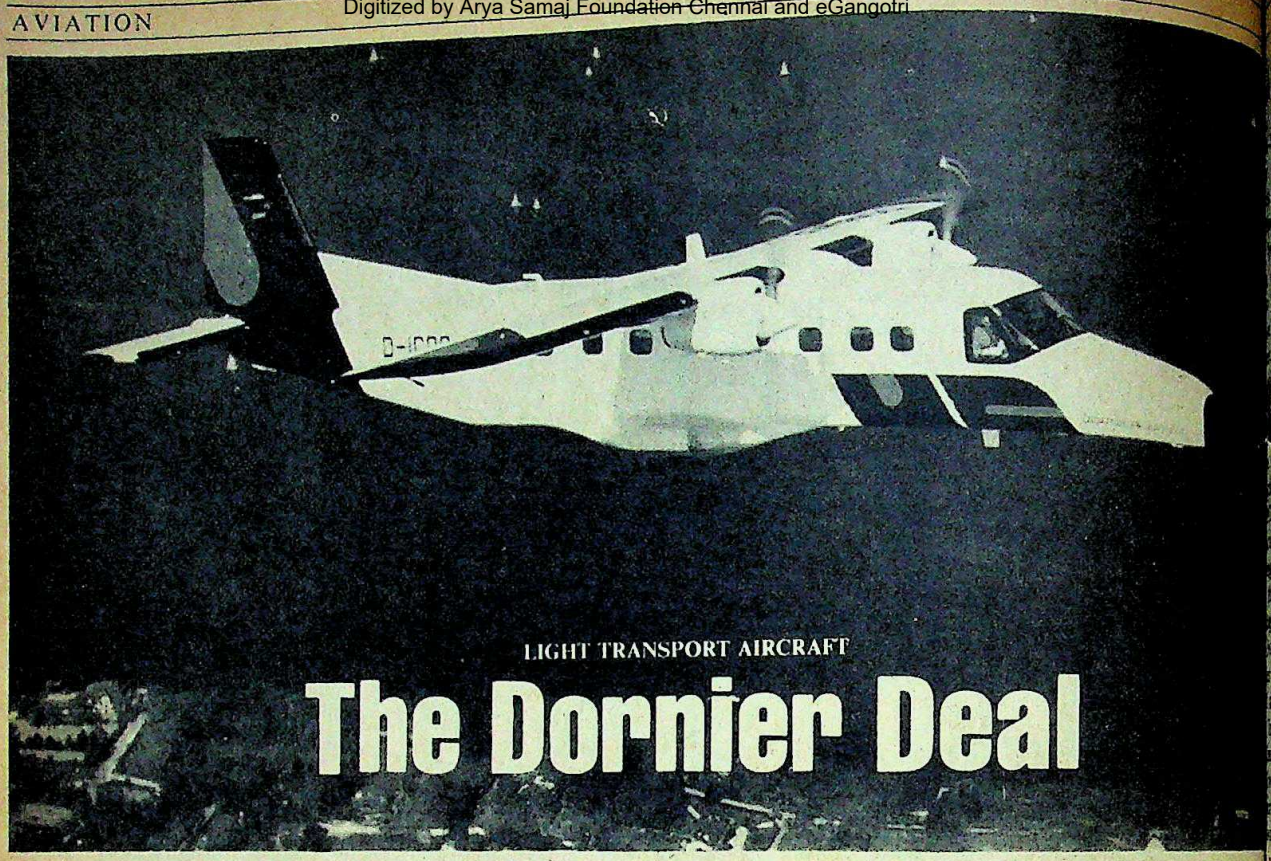
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APEX CS 1682

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LIGHT TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

The Dornier Deal

THE WAY events are unfolding, there will shortly be a need to post air traffic policemen in Indian skies, with the Mirage 2000 and MiG Foxbat, Air-India's new Airbus 300s, the Navy's anti-submarine helicopters all scheduled to make their debut in the near future. But the largest number of new birds in Indian air space are, ironically enough, none of the above. The new species will probably be a snub-nosed, stubby-winged commuter aircraft called the Dornier 228, a 19-seater LTA (Light Transport Aircraft). The Indian Government and the West German manufacturers of the Dornier are in the final stages of reaching an agreement for the purchase and indigenous manufacture of around 200 Dornier 228-220s for the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Navy, and the country's fledgeling aviation entrants—the coast guard and Vayudoot. The price-tag? Rs 400 crore.

What is surprising about the deal is not so much the price-tag as the fact that the Dornier purchase is one which very few people know about. No mention about the deal has been made in Parliament or the press and like almost every major aircraft deal in the recent past, the Dornier's arrival is certain to be accompanied by some raucous recriminations, particularly about the manner in which the deal has been pushed through and the IAF's role in the affair.

The Story: Like all recent deals, the Dornier story reads like a Ludlum chiller replete with plots and counterplots, pressures and counter pressures and a tortuous trail of red herrings. The story opens in 1974, when the Ministry of Defence set up a committee under well-known scientist V.R. Sinha, to examine the feasibility of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) designing a small passenger aircraft. The Sinha Committee consisted of representatives from the IAF, Indian Airlines (IA), HAL and the Ministry of Defence. The committee was basically entrusted with examining three key questions: Was it feasible; did the demand exist domestically and, lastly, was HAL capable of undertaking the task?

Meanwhile, along came Raj Bahadur as minister for tourism and civil aviation waving the banner for the introduction of a third level airline in 1975. With the introduction of a new twist in the plot, the committee suddenly woke up and submitted its report which said, in essence, that there was a possible demand for between 150 and 300 aircraft and that HAL was capable of producing the goods. There was, inevitably, one catch. Nobody was sure about what size the aircraft should be. The IAF was convinced that it required a 10-seater to replace its ageing and mostly unused Devons and Otters, of which it has around 30. The coast guard, which at that time had very little say in the matter, was willing to go along with the IAF. IA, however, which was entrusted with the Vayudoot proposal, shot down the 10-seater idea and demanded instead a commuter aircraft with a minimum of 20 seats.

Compromise: Typically, the ... dragged on and finally a convenient ... mise was adopted since the IAF co... for a bigger aircraft while Vayudo... not accept anything smaller. Fina... seater aircraft was mooted, and for a ... practical reason. According to inte... aviation regulations, any aircraft w... ries more than 19 passengers is re... provide additional facilities like ... attendant, a toilet and a galley. Sin... force and coast guard had no need ... refinements and the third level airli... be indulging in only short hops, it w... 18-seater would be the best compro...

In late 1975, the proposal was s... to the Government. IA were still s... of the IAF's motives and, in 1976, ... chart their own independent survey ... ational requirements and went thr... entire procedure again. Their conclu... that they would need between 40 an... mainly to service their north-easter... Their recommendation was the T... a Canadian-built workhorse that ha... itself in similar operations all over t...

At this point, the Director-G... Civil Aviation (DGCA) decided to ge... act, and was asked to prepare a ... report on how many cities require... and what would be the require... DGCA submitted a report which ... around 50 19-seater aircraft w... reasonable figure to service the ... airports. The recommendation for ...

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centred around the Canadian Twin
Australian Nomad and the
Short Skyvan, all more or less
aircraft with comparable perfor-
and price-tags.

Thickens: This was followed by the
bureaucratic humming and hawing.
Defence Ministry official like-
a wind-sock flapping in a storm".
till 1978 that the plot thickened.
of World War II fame, made
independently to HAL on the
of a joint design and manufacture
Dornier, like all other German
manufacturers, had shut down
after the war and only resumed
concentrating on the gradual
of STOL (Short Take Off and
aircraft. HAL jumped at the offer
already had a design on the
boards called the HAC-33, a design
certain similarities with the
design. A tentative agreement was
and an exchange of engineers took
In 1979, HAL decided that the project
and passed the buck on to
ernment, which promptly sat on it.
of course, was
that India was
market for an LTA.
same year, the
Marshal Za-
ded to take a
k at the project
felt that all four
operators
really had a fair
proposals. In
his report was
which recom-
Twin Otter or
mad. The latter,
didn't have as good a track record
peared that the Twin Otter had won
-like race for the LTA.

INDIAN aviation history, however,
race is never over till it's won. Even
Otter people were pulling out their
sign the deal a surprise competitor
on the horizon, the result of politi-
ure from the highest level, namely
Gandhi. According to reliable sour-
ay ordered the ministry to take a
the Spanish CASA 212, a 26-seater
With almost indecent haste the
flown into India for trials. The IAF
liked the aircraft because of its
ing capacity and since it was basi-
signed for military purposes.
aircraft, however, was hardly suit-
Vayudoot since it was too noisy and
table for passengers. In any event,
days it spent in India, the aircraft
ground for four due to engine
trouble. In retrospect, however, it is almost certain that the CASA would have got the nod had Sanjay not met his untimely end. Further, it was a 26-seater which met none of the operators' requirements, except the IAF. As aviation expert Pushpinder Singh says: "It was neither fish nor fowl."

Vacillation: The strangest part was the manner in which the IAF kept changing its requirements. It had first insisted on a 10-seater, then agreed to a 19-seater and, with the CASA, it now was happy with a 26-seater, and that too when the Government had already contracted for the Soviet AN-32 which served the same purpose.

By now, the LTA project had gone through three separate committees, apart from the independent surveys carried out by IA and the DGCA, and was no nearer its goal. Dornier, fed up of waiting for the Government's response, had backed out and were busy with design and production of the 228.

The entire exercise was repeated once again with the Menon Committee, headed by the former defence secretary, who re-examined the project in detail. K.P.A. Menon, who was an efficient and knowledgeable administrator, got the four prospective operators together and hammered out a compromise on the type and size of aircraft. He also shortlisted 10 aircraft and then insisted on three requirements—STOL capability, turbo-prop, twin-engined versions and low operating costs. Out of the 10, three met all the requirements: the Dornier 228, which was a brand-new aircraft with its first flight in 1981, the Skyvan and the CASA, which the IAF was still plugging for. In August 1981, the Dornier was given the nod and a team of IAF pilots flew to West Germany to test fly the aircraft.

Impressive: On paper, and according to the glossy brochure prepared by Dornier for its prospective Indian customers, the Dornier is by far the best of the lot. Its new technology wing (TNT) is similar to the supercritical wings developed for the Airbus which gives it high lift and low drag, and a 30 per cent lower fuel burn on its 715 HP engines. Further, it has an eight-hour endurance on internal fuel with a range of 1,150 kilometres. The bottom line, of course, was the fuel saving characteristics. The Dornier uses one-third less power than its rivals to propel the same number of passengers.

With the Dornier deal now in its final stages, it is unlikely that any further hitches will occur. There are, however, a number of awkward questions that are certain to crop up once the deal is announced. One is the fact that the Dornier is an untried aircraft and India will be one of its first customers, thereby more or less bankrolling its future production. The second is that it has not been tested in Indian conditions which are vastly different from European ones. In fact, a Dornier prototype crashed in March 1982, killing three occupants while on a test flight. Again, in the high air temperatures in India it may not perform as well as its makers say it will. Finally, the Dornier has so far only been test flown by IAF pilots, whose requirements and evaluation standards are markedly different from that of its civilian operators, namely, Vayudoot. Since the IAF will require less aircraft than the third level airline, it would appear to be a major aberration.

TYPE & • (Number of Passengers)	Country of Origin	First Flight	Power	Range (Kms)	Cruising Speed (Km/hr)	Price (Rs Crore)
CASA C-212 • (19)	Spain	1971	TPE331	480	315	1.8
DHC-6 TWIN OTTER • (20)	Canada	1961	Pratt & Whitney 6A-27	700	338	1.5
SHORT SKYVAN • (19)	Britain	1963	Garret TPE	1115	314	1.6
NOMAD • (19)	Australia	1971	Allison TPE	1585	269	1.8
DORNIER 228-200 • (19)	W. Germany	1981	Garret TPE	1150	332	1.8

Premature: The crux of the question is the requirement. The other three operators have a genuine requirement for an aircraft like the Dornier; but does the IAF? According to their requirements, the Dornier is meant for "communications" which could easily reduce it to a ferry service for the top brass.

It would be tragic if the Dornier were to go the way of the Devons or even the Avros, both of which have proved expensive white elephants. It would also be highly premature for the country to sign a deal of such magnitude without subjecting the Dornier to tests in local conditions. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether HAL has the capacity to manufacture the aircraft here. Only a handful are likely to be bought off the shelf and the rest produced in Bangalore under licence. HAL already has its hands full with the ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter), the LCA (Light Combat Aircraft), the Jaguar and Mirage and it will be hard-pressed to jump into Dornier production which is an advanced technology aircraft. On the other hand, the Dornier might just give them the experience and edge they desperately need to make the quantum jump into competitive aircraft production. Either way, the Dornier is still very much a large question mark.

—DILIP BOBB

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rest Fire

DLOGISTS in Tamil Nadu have declared war on the state Government. The battleground is Pichavaram, 200 Madras, one of the best preserved forests in the country. The state ment is keen on developing this mag- 000-acre forest into a tourist re- boating, surfing and water-skiing along with cottages located in the fight this, the Tamil Nadu Science nd the Madras Naturalists Society convened a meeting of prominent ts, zoologists, naturalists and marine who have cried halt to the project the setting up of an expert com- how to best utilise this "natural ry".

ngrove forests are found only in the where they grow by the seaside and ver banks where the water is brac- The vegetation is re as it is able root in the nd highly sa- India has an 20 lakh acres grove forests, st ones being Bengal and damans. The why Pichava- so many cru- that it is one w left where lete sequence grove zonation dence from dense foliage with stilted the banks to sparse vegetation at



RAJ CHENGAPPA

The Pichavaram tourist complex: battleground

reased Erosion: Another factor that ntributed to the lushness of ram is the three rivers that flow its 10 km long and 3 km wide area. ers form a maze of shallow channels are so numerous and tricky that the opulace jokingly remarks that even ts which are familiar with the water- get lost in Pichavaram. However, stu- ne by the French Institute indicate e development work has already in- coastal erosion.

d Professor V.M. Meher Homji, a at the Institute: "Pichavaram must rved not only because it is a natural ry but also because it has been an nt factor in stabilising the shifting ment on the soil thus preventing r vegetation in the denuded sections. ation of the cottages within the wooded area will lead to other problems: ecologists feel that with a growing tourist trade the populace would soon start plundering the forests for fuel and fodder.

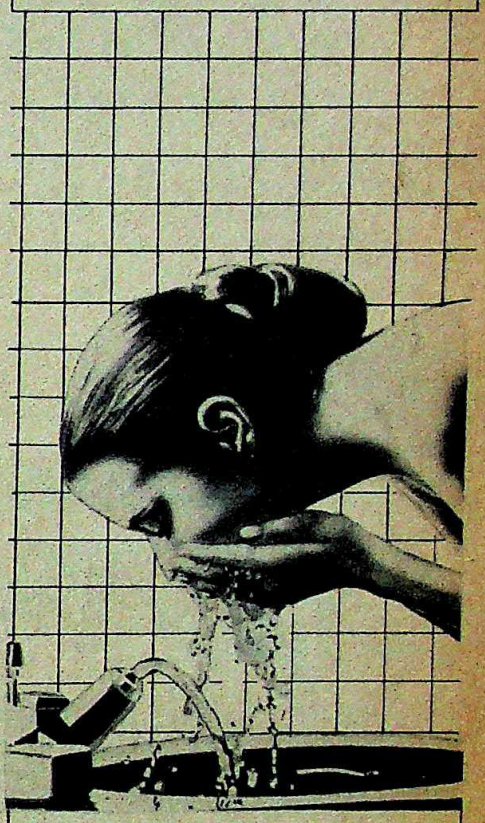
The repercussions are likely to extend beyond the ecological field. Reports from the Centre for Advanced Studies in Marine Biology of the Annamalai University at Perangipettai reveal that Pichavaram is a rich breeding ground and nursery for such lucrative seafood as prawns, lobsters and crabs. With building activities as well as the introduction of water sports once the resort is completed, the shallow channels which criss-cross the forest will no longer be able to harbour the varied marine life. Warns Meher Homji: "Any further disturbances to the delicate balance of the eco-system will lead to the rapid deterioration of the mangrove forests."

Limited Success: The ecologists have now asked the Government to stop all further construction in Pichavaram. They suggest that the cottages and the resort area be located in Chidambaram, a tourist centre just 11 km away, and groups be brought to the mangrove forests for day trips. After repeated letters to the Tamil Nadu Government, the Department of Environment and the prime minister, Meher Homji was asked last fortnight to meet the Committee on Tourist Excursions, chaired by V. Chandralekha, collector of Cuddalore district under which Pichavaram falls.

The meeting was partly successful with the members agreeing to recommend to the Government a proposal to drop water sports and prohibit motor boats in the channels. Only row boats would be allowed. No decision, however, was taken on the shifting of the cottages. Chandralekha told INDIA TODAY in Cuddalore: "We have no intention of clashing with the ecologists. We are equally keen on preserving Pichavaram and will try our best to implement their suggestions." But with construction of the cottages proceeding briskly, the mangrove forests of Pichavaram may soon become a thing of the past.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA in Pichavaram

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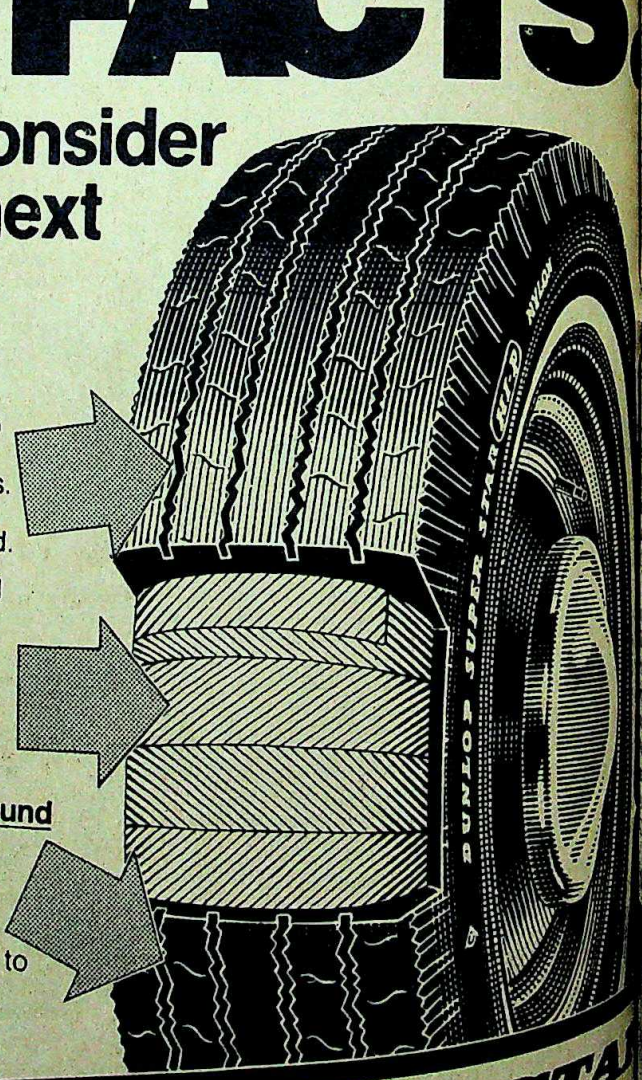
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HOSPITALS

ill Or Cure?

N THE cure prove to be worse than e disease? A well-documented con- dential report submitted to the desh Government answers in the ve. It establishes that a group of spitals in Kanpur including the civil ary hospitals and the Upper India change (UISE) maternity hospital credibly high rate of infection and eric contamination.

50-page study project entitled "Air- hanges and infection in hospitals" ertaken by the department of social ventive medicine of the Kanpur ollege in 1979. Even though a copy warded to the government autho- part findings published in the rent's *Indian Journal of Community* e next to nothing has come of it.

Jyoti Swarup Mathur, 50, head partment of social and preventive e said that samples taken repeatedly four hospitals during the period of ting more than a year confirmed ital atmospheric infection. He told DAY that the bacteria count which variety of infections was anywhere 6,000 and 10,000 organisms per ic of air and could be the cause of fections or lung or kidney infections ysentery and diarrhoea in children. example he said that a house officer m one of the hospitals under in- m (neither was named) had died m Lucknow while suffering from a bscess possibly due to hospital n.

ter Risk: The article printed in the ental journal notes that, in contrast al environment, an unclean hospital ment offers a great risk since it s a large number of virulent or- released from patients carrying se- ctions and antibiotic resistant bac- Mathur confirms that the rate of cross infection (patient to patient) was as high as 50 per cent of the total admitted cases in these four hospitals.

That incidence of infections in civil and military hospitals is comparable at all would seem strange given the restriction on admissions, the higher nutritional status of patients, the low turnover and the high doctor-patient ratio (1:20) enjoyed by the latter.

Nevertheless, of a combined total of 1,040 cases (in just these two hospitals alone) studied for hospital acquired infection, as many as 325 cases were declared positive with the percentage in the civil hospital being as high as 44-56 per cent. Moreover, surface samples including floor dust, wall scrapings and furniture fittings as well as equipment samples including hospital instruments like rubber goods, dressing materials, antiseptic lotions, linen, suturing materials and gas cylinders were also found to be bacterially infected.

A number of tests conducted on throat, nasal and skin swabs taken from doctors, nurses, ward boys and class IV employees attending on patients yielded similar results. Most of the incinerators were found not in use and unsatisfactory disposal of discarded hospital waste product and highly pathogenic laboratory specimens further deteriorated hospital hygiene.

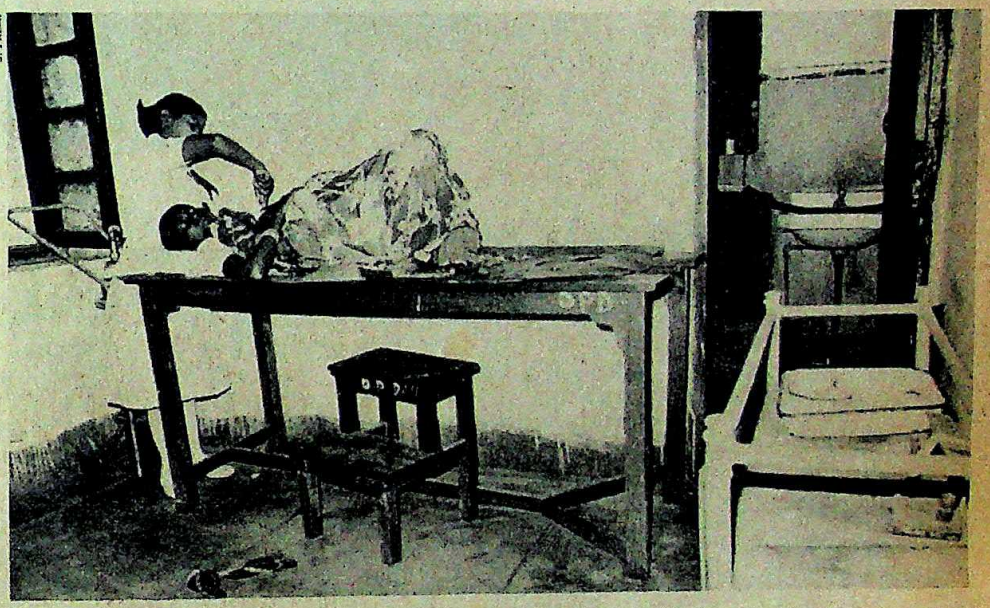
The incidence of bacterial infection was found to be highest in operation theatres. And to top it all, even dressings and syringes were reported to be in short supply on almost any given day. Ventilation facilities even in operation theatres, leave alone crowded general wards, were found to be insufficient and floors which should have been swept with proper disinfectants were normally cleaned only by dry mops. The prevailing apathetic attitude seems to have hampered any substantial or effective improvements over the years, making a bad situation even worse.

Staggering Figure: The distinctive record of the UISE maternity hospital in infection cases could legitimately figure in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. A staff nurse as well as a junior doctor (both wishing to remain anonymous) confided that the infection rate was believed to be almost 90 per cent—a staggering figure by any standards. Parrying questions, however, Medical Superintendent Dr (Mrs) Pratibha Rohatgi insisted that "it is much less" and further that "most of the cases we admit from time to time are already infected, many of them being referral cases which we cannot refuse".

First-hand observations, however, indicate the contrary. In the emergency room, the metal instruments tray was rusted in the corners and a broken trolley was full of discarded junk. Rubber mattresses in the general ward were in shreds at the corners and heavily stained. A perennial supply shortage made it impossible to replace them at the prescribed three-month intervals.

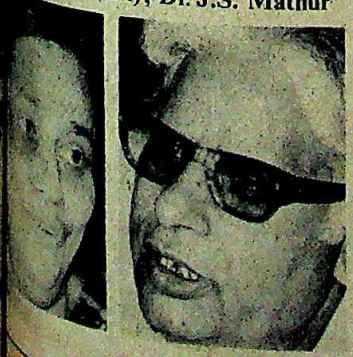
Concerned authorities when contacted in the state capital in this connection consistently maintained a "no comment" stance, thereby side-stepping the entire issue which points to an inexplicable indifference in so vital a sector as public health.

—ANAND SAGAR in Kanpur



S. PREMI

Emergency ward of the UISE hospital: unforgivably low standards



Rohatgi (left); Dr. J.S. Mathur

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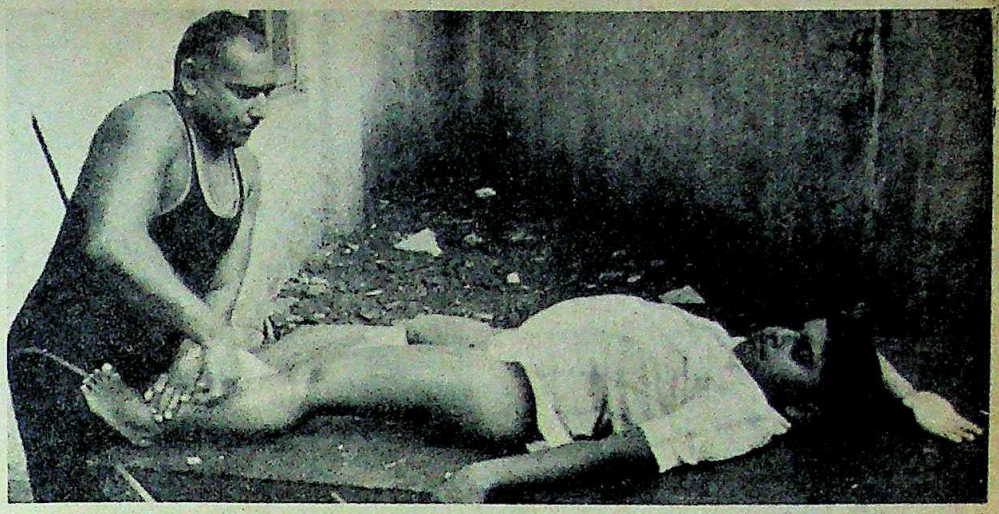
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e 'Miracle' re

HEN two-year-old Lokeshwari ontracted polio on her left hand d leg a year ago, her father, ana, who works as a clerk in took her to several child but was told politely that there as yet for polio. Last December, ana read in a local newspaper of a my jawan who was said to be polio patients with remarkable immediately contacted the army ffice and was informed that he to wait till May before the jawan his daughter. But the wait proved . For today, thanks to Lance wantji Rao Jhadav, Lokeshwari, condemned to a wheelchair, now plays like any normal child. hand and leg are slowly coming life and, although she has a s able to walk and ghts in her hands: could not do before ated her.

kwari is only one of polio patients that stocky, 39-year-old s been "treating" for ight years. Jhadav's ave yet to be exa- medical science and scientific explanation pparent success. But burgeoning clientele the envy of any practitioner. He is reating 1,259 patients over India and has e on his waiting list— not be cleared before dav takes no money k and is content with e salary of Rs 600 army pays him. He working on polio ith a missionary zeal 4 when he helped a colonel's daughter to walk once again.

t: In Bangalore where Jhadav is posted, the queues outside his endless and by 8 a.m. a crowd parents carrying their polio- children is awaiting his arrival. dav, sporting a black banyan and pants, walks briskly past them ped by cries of: "Doctor saab, my child." He tactfully extracts himself and enters his small one-room clinic containing a long table, an oil bottle, two elementary medical charts showing blood circulation in a human body and a host of Hindu deities peeping through garlanded frames hung on the walls.



RAJ CHENGAPPA

Jhadav massaging a patient: no scientific explanation of his success

The first patient on this particular day is a young boy with a crippled leg. He rubs oil on the boy's leg, massages it for a minute and then calls for the next patient. Jhadav's technique still remains a mystery but he says that when he was a boy in Sangli district, Maharashtra, a village elder taught him the methods. Jhadav's guru made him take 20 oaths which included promises that he would not take money for treating people and practise the art only when his teacher died. In 1974 when Jhadav, who had by then joined the army and was serving in Jammu, heard the news of his guru's death, he started his practice.



RAJ CHENGAPPA

Lokeshwari: almost back to normal

Jhadav is not educated but he has his own way of explaining his method. He reasons that the simplest way to get crippled parts moving again is to reactivate the blood flow. So he moves his fingers nimbly over the affected joints to find out exactly where the blood flow has stopped. He then uses pork oil, which reportedly has a warming effect, and massages the areas where there is no blood circulation. It is this precise and sustained massage which seems to make his patients better. He is particular that his patients visit him every day and has a remarkable memory that keeps track of each patient's ailment. He just has to feel the patient's affected legs to find out if he has missed a day's 'treatment'. He claims that if there is a gap of a day then almost two weeks of massage goes to waste. He instructs his patients not to eat foodstuffs that "cool" the body. Additionally, all of them have to do simple exercises in the sun for three hours a day. Jhadav stipulates a 'treatment' period of 19 days to six months. The patient is checked thrice before declared "cured".

Effective: Most of his patients, which include even doctors' children, that INDIA TODAY interviewed were enthusiastic over Jhadav's treatment. Says Dr S. Chittalia of Bombay, whose 12-year-old son Abbas has been seeing Jhadav: "Not only has my son discarded his calipers but his left leg which was shorter than his right is now growing and his limp is reduced." Similarly Kiran Khaitan's six-year-old daughter, Nithi, whose legs are crippled and who was taken to all the top specialists including those in London and Paris, to no avail started walking after Jhadav tried his cure on her.

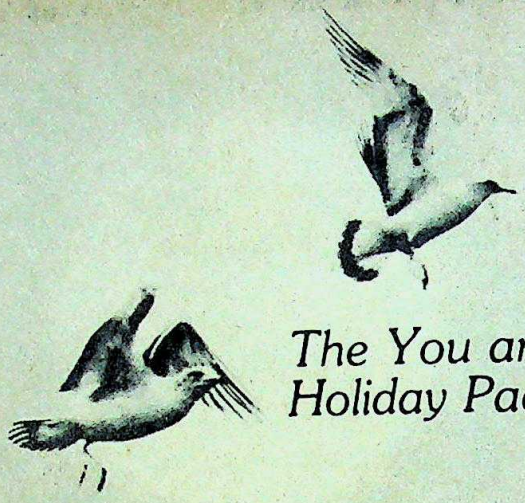
Jhadav's work could be significant because physiotherapy, the normal treatment for polio patients, has rarely been able to bring about a complete cure for crippled limbs. But so far no research institution has investigated Jhadav's work to find out if there can be a scientific explanation. A neurologist at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore, said: "It is scientifically difficult to explain such phenomena but we have not taken up a study on him as yet although we have read about success."

Meanwhile the army has freed Jhadav from his ordinary duties so that he can carry on his work. Jhadav's Jammu unit has been demanding his return but Brigadier V.R. Swaminathan, the Karnataka sub-area commander, is adamant that Jhadav remain in Bangalore for a while till he 'treats' a few hundred more patients or till his miracle cures get some scientific recognition.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA

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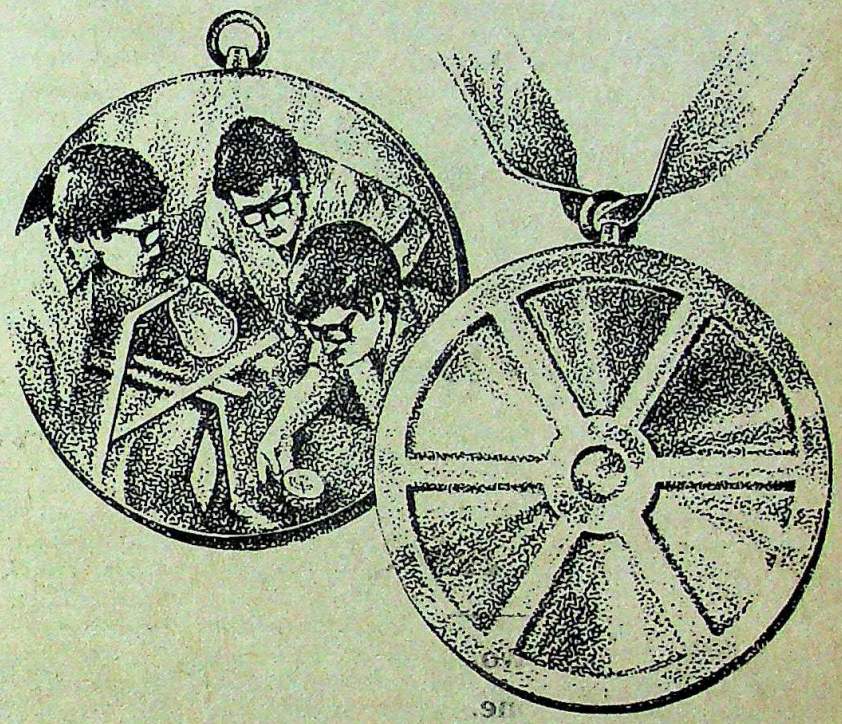
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The Power Of Protest



"LIFE, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness...", these were the self-evident truths vouchsafed by the American Declaration of Independence for posterity. It is one of the ironies of history that ideals have always undergone a mutation in the course of human events. Today in a world living under the evil portents of a nuclear holocaust, the Government that incarnates these noble sentiments is represented by deeply entrenched nuclear warriors pitted against the swelling upsurge of a grass roots peace movement in America and Western Europe. In June this polarisation manifested its growing strength on both sides of the Atlantic. Something truly magnificent is happening: a turnaway from nuclear war brought about not by the statesmanship of rulers but by a massive sustained protest of young people.

The movement's first tangible result can be seen on Ronald Reagan and his cold-warrior administration. In May Reagan wore the mantle of a "peacemonger". He offered a package of arms control or reduction proposals to the Soviet Union and agreed to engage in negotiations without precondition. He also agreed to observe the provisions of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-II) treaty which he had denounced vehemently in his election campaign and which his Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, still considers "dead".

In June, Reagan took his "peace proposals" to Western Europe. In mixed accents of war and peace, Reagan tried to assure his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) colleagues in Bonn that he was not seeking a nuclear war with Moscow, nor did he intend to wage economic war against the Soviet bloc. He was ready to peacefully co-exist with the Soviet Union and even engage in trade and economic relations if Moscow proved "by deeds" that "it is prepared to be a responsible member of the international community". In the third week of June, Haig had 10 hours of debris-clearing talks with his Soviet counterpart, Andrei Gromyko, at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York.

Massive Rally: As Reagan and his NATO colleagues were conferring in a stately building in Bonn, on the west bank of the Rhine river, on June 10, an unprecedented assemblage of 350,000 Germans on the east bank protested the US president's military buildup and nuclear policies. Of these, 2,000 rushed to Bonn carrying "Reagan Go Home" stickers and clashed with almost as many helmeted baton-wielding police. What stunned Americans even more was the sight of West German soldiers in uniform holding a banner that declared that NATO troops were against the stationing of nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

The rally was played down by newspapers and magazines in Western Europe and America, but it got extensive television coverage. A majority of US reporters accompanying the presidential party preferred to cover the demonstration rather than the NATO meeting. Reagan pretended to ignore the anti-nuclear-war movement's swelling supporters, but several members of his entourage realised that the president was, in fact, visiting two Germanys. One Germany was reluctantly ready to go along with the United States. The other Germany was trying to chart its own course in European and world affairs.

The impact of the "other Germany" has started to assume a political weightage that alarms both the West German ruling elite and their allies in America. The Greens, an environmentalist left-wing group opposed to the West German Government's nuclear and defence policies, picked up an astonishing 7.7 per cent of the votes cast in the June election to the legislature of the city-state of Hamburg. They thereby inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Helmut Schmidt and on the Chancellor himself because he had staked his personal prestige on the outcome of the poll in his home town. The Greens's electoral success denied any legislative majority to any party. It made them a national political force with significant presence in five state assemblies.

Peace Movement: The West German Peace Movement (WGPM) has invaded the United States. In an appeal to Americans in June, the WGPM reiterated the rationale of the anti-nuclear movement in Germany. It stated that "The Federal Republic of Germany lies on the border between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In the event of military conflict, there will be no defence conceivable—only destruction. Based on the capabilities of precise nuclear weapons, some politicians and military leaders of the western alliance are thinking aloud about the possibility of nuclear war in Europe. Such a war would mean the annihilation of Europe and entails the possibility of world-wide destruction. Eastern and western experts, especially in the United States, have repeatedly confirmed that it is a dangerous illusion to expect that a nuclear war can be limited in any way. It is highly probable that it would also encompass the superpowers and annihilate millions in the USA and in the Soviet Union."

The anti-nuclear-war movement rose to new heights in the United States in June. A most spectacular mass rally, the biggest ever in New York, brought 500,000 Americans from hundreds of towns in a demonstration that coincided with the opening of the UN General Assembly's second special session on disarmament. The rally was more than a protest against Reagan's nuclear policy. Numerous banners signified the American public's frustrations and resentment about the administration's determined assault on the social gains of American democracy. Nearly a million Americans paraded in front of the UN building on the banks of the East River in Lower Manhattan, while several hundred shadowed for a day the UN offices of the five nuclear powers—the US, USSR, Britain, France and China.

In the United States too, the anti-nuclear-war movement has become a political force. Proposals calling on the US and the USSR to freeze the production of nuclear weapons and negotiate reduction have been endorsed by at least 414 public bodies, including town meetings, 67 city councils, 19 county councils, three state senate districts, and legislatures of eight states.

THE FREEZE proposal lost by 10 votes to six in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) in June. The committee, instead, backed the Reagan proposals for reduction of nuclear arms. However, the line-up showed that "freeze" is now a part of the political platform of the Democratic Party. The proposal had been sponsored jointly in March by Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Hatfield, the former being the most likely Democratic presidential candidate in 1984. At the vast New York rally, speaker after speaker denounced the SFRC's rejection of freeze, and declared that "we shall remember this in November", when numerous senators, congressmen and governors seek re-election.

The anti-nuclear-war movement has wrested from the

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...t. Leonid Brezhnev, a formal commitment to the UN that ...SR "will never be the first to use nuclear weapons". This is a ...provement on the Soviet declaration at the first special ...n of the UN General Assembly on disarmament in 1978, that ...w would not use nuclear weapons against any state which ...k make them or station them on its territory. The USSR and ...now stand at par with their unconditional and categorical ...ease commitment. The United States continues to reject ...mmitment on the ground that only with its option to strike ...h nuclear weapons can it deter the Soviets from attacking ...Europe with their superior conventional forces.

...the United States, however, pressure is building on Reagan ...tiate a no-first-strike ...with the USSR. The ...split the ruling elite in ... Among its most ...d advocates are three ...national security ad... US presidents, two ...secretaries of state, two ...defence secretaries in... Robert MacNamara, ...orge Kennan, currently ...lectual high-priest of ...nd nuclear arms con... coalition of Democrat ...publican senators and ...men now urges Reagan ...e and ratify the SALT-II ... They fear that a new ...uld take years to nego...tiate, in the meantime, ...perpowers would have ...e nuclear arms race to ...more dangerous level. ...st among SALT-II's new ...n is Henry Kissinger ... testimony before the ...a 1979 helped to do the ...n. Kissinger now says ...has "great difficulty" in ...standing "why it is safe to ...to a non-ratified agree...ment while it is unsafe to ratify ...ne is already observing".



Anti-nuclear demonstrators in Bonn: building up pressure

...er Attack: Reagan's ...arms control proposals, ...ward in May and early ...two speeches at Eureka ... his Alma Mater in ... and at the Arlington Cemetery in Washington DC, have ...ndler fire not only in the Soviet Union but also in the United ...lf. Senator Kennedy bitterly observed that the president's ...als "would permit the United States to build the MX missile, ...bomber and an entire new generation of nuclear weapons". ...added, "So could the Soviets."

...p, one of the intellectual think-tanks pressing for nuclear ... told Americans in a nation-wide publicity campaign: ...dent Reagan's arms control proposal of May 9 merely seeks ...fy the millions who are demanding a bilateral arms race ...ll does not answer or satisfy the demand." Reminding ...ans that SALT-II took years to negotiate, SANE said that the ...proposals were "filled with tricks" which would give the ...ian advantages and which the Soviets "are sure to reject". ...ble, Reagan "obviously intends to continue the US overkill buildup and add $222 billion in nuclear warfighting capacity by 1986".

Critics of the Reagan proposals draw support from a five-year defence plan formulated by the administration. It was leaked out to the press just before the president's Arlington speech. The plan provides for "nuclear counter-attacks" against the Soviet Union "over a protracted period", calls for economic warfare in peace-time against the Soviet bloc and for developing the capacity to conduct guerrilla warfare against East European countries and other "targets".

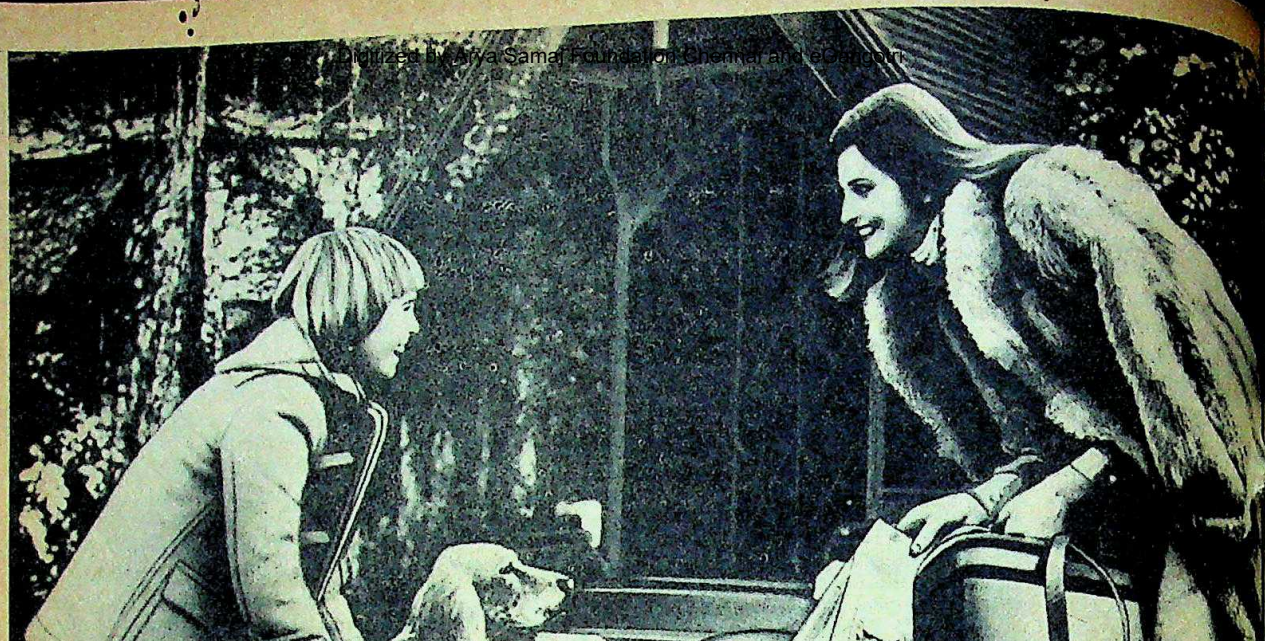
Two-track Plans: The Reagan Administration, then, intends to pursue a two-track policy: massive arms buildup and pursuit of arms limitation or reduction accords, and what Reagan has termed as "genuine detente". However, the two-track programme has begun to founder on the twin rocks of American domestic politics and the western alliance's economic distress. The US Congress has obliged Reagan to accept a trimming of his defence budget, while the allies have told him in polite but firm language that he must mute his cold war, seriously negotiate arms limitation with Moscow, and lower American interest rates which the West Europeans regard as a strong incentive to a durable recession.

It is clear to most observers that the nuclear arms buildup issue will snowball into a major political theme in the American elections beginning November. It will take months, perhaps a year, to arrange for serious negotiations between Washington and Moscow. In the meantime, the November elections will show whether and to what extent nuclear freeze has already become a major political issue. If American voters reject protagonists of limited and winnable nuclear war and elect those who support the freeze movement, the Reagan Administration will be pushed further on the defensive and may be forced by the political tide to move faster to a new agreement. In any case, the nuclear debate will probably dominate the next presidential election, beginning with the primaries in 1983.

The splendour of the palace at Versailles, the solidity of England's Windsor Castle, the ancient solemnity of Westminster, the imperial ruins of Rome, the faded sinister folklore of the Berlin Wall, and the leafy stillness of the Rhineland added colour to Ronald Reagan's date with Europe. But he saw only one Europe in June; on the other, he turned the blind eye of Nelson. Ruefully mused one of his more far-sighted colleagues, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, of Canada: "Mr Reagan should have spoken to the youths on the other side of the Rhine. Contact (with these young people) would have helped him understand the mood of the other Europe."

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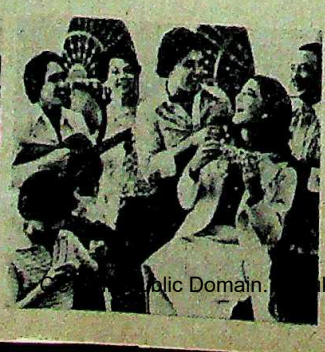
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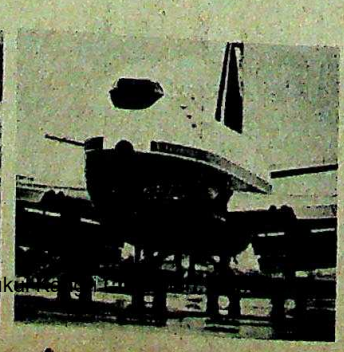
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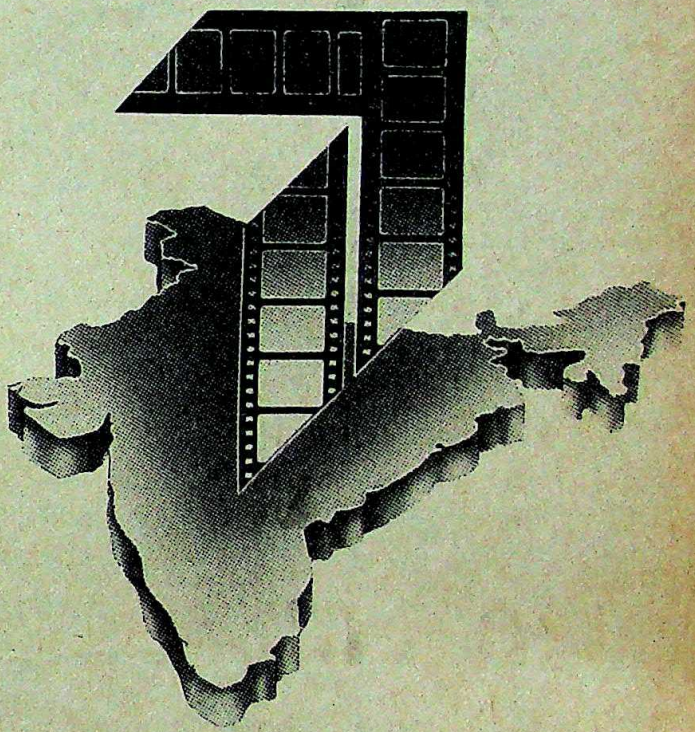
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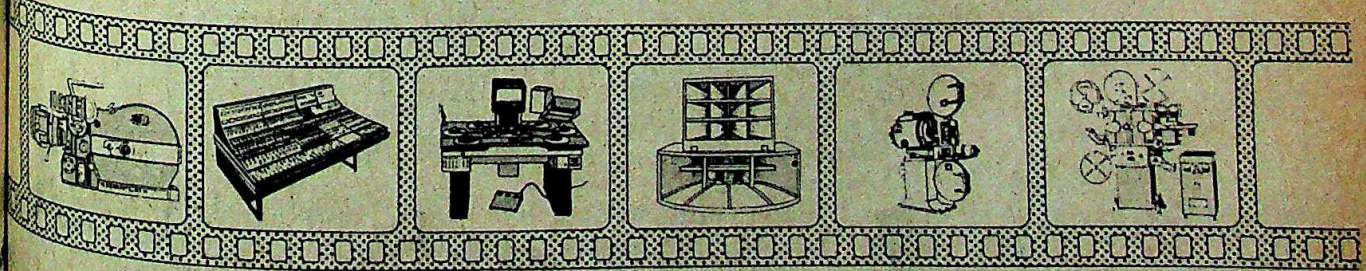
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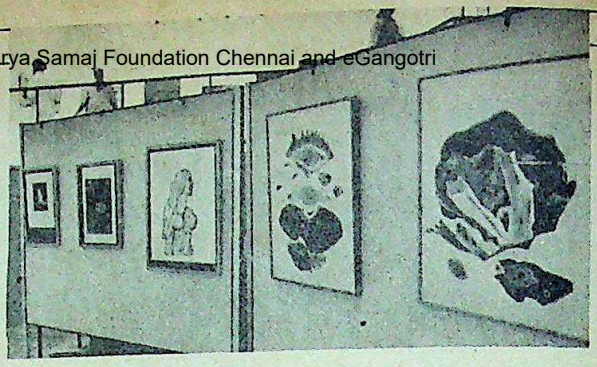
EXHIBITION

Poor Show

THE GENERALLY held notion that creative artists need a muse, a motivating force to express themselves effectively was demonstrated last fortnight when 77 painters, sculptors, graphic artists and a photographer held an exhibition-cum-auction of their works in aid of the victims of the devastating cyclone which struck Orissa early last month.

Inspired by the agony of the unfortunate victims of the devastation, prominent painters like Manu Parekh, Ved Nayar, Rameshwar Broota, Jatin Das, Ram Kumar, Laxma Goud, K.K. Hebbar and J. Swaminathan, together with sculptors Himmat Shah, Gouri Khosla and V.D. Sharma and photographer Raghu Rai, to name a few, decided to contribute their creative efforts by setting up the Delhi Artists Committee for the Orissa Cyclone Relief and holding an auction at the Rabindra Bhavan Gallery in New Delhi last fortnight.

The general apathy of Delhi's cultural elite was however evident from the fact that, in spite of the severely slashed price-tags—Manu Parekh's oil on canvas titled the *Animal*, priced at Rs 6,000 was the most expensive—and the considerable pre-auction publicity, the city's art patrons preferred to look the other way.



The Orissa paintings on display: insensitive response

The artists who had painstakingly organised the show were predictably sore. Said Jatin Das who donated 10 of his on-the-spot cyclone sketches for the exhibition: "I am aghast that our public has ignored this exhibition. The only interested people who came were foreigners. Even the bidding and buying was mostly done by foreigners and fellow artists."

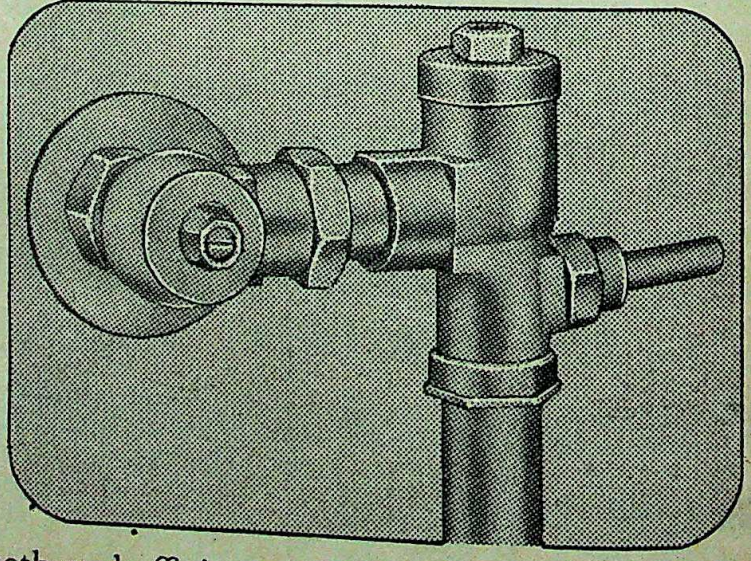
Some of the good creations of artists like Jogan Chowdhuri, Arpana Caur, Saroj Pal Gogi and other artists, including 10 cyclone photographs of Raghu Rai were on display. Both Rai a... had been sponso... Government of ... photograph and ... affected areas, 10 d... disaster struck. ... Akademi's Richard... mew collaborated ... seek the help of oth... put up the show. T... tional finance was ... donated by various ... titutions and prominent art pers... Said painter Saroj Pal Gogi: "W... have bought each other's works ... the prices being reduced specia... auction, which was not at all ... fessional level, the crowds hav... general insensitivity towards t... issue." The art exhibition, till ... going to the press, had raise... Rs 40,000 from the actual sales a... Rs 22,000 out of brochure a... tisement sales.

Said an embittered artist: "It ... a question of art lovers being con... that of the whole country being ... and unsympathetic. Even the G... should be ashamed of showi... concern." —A...

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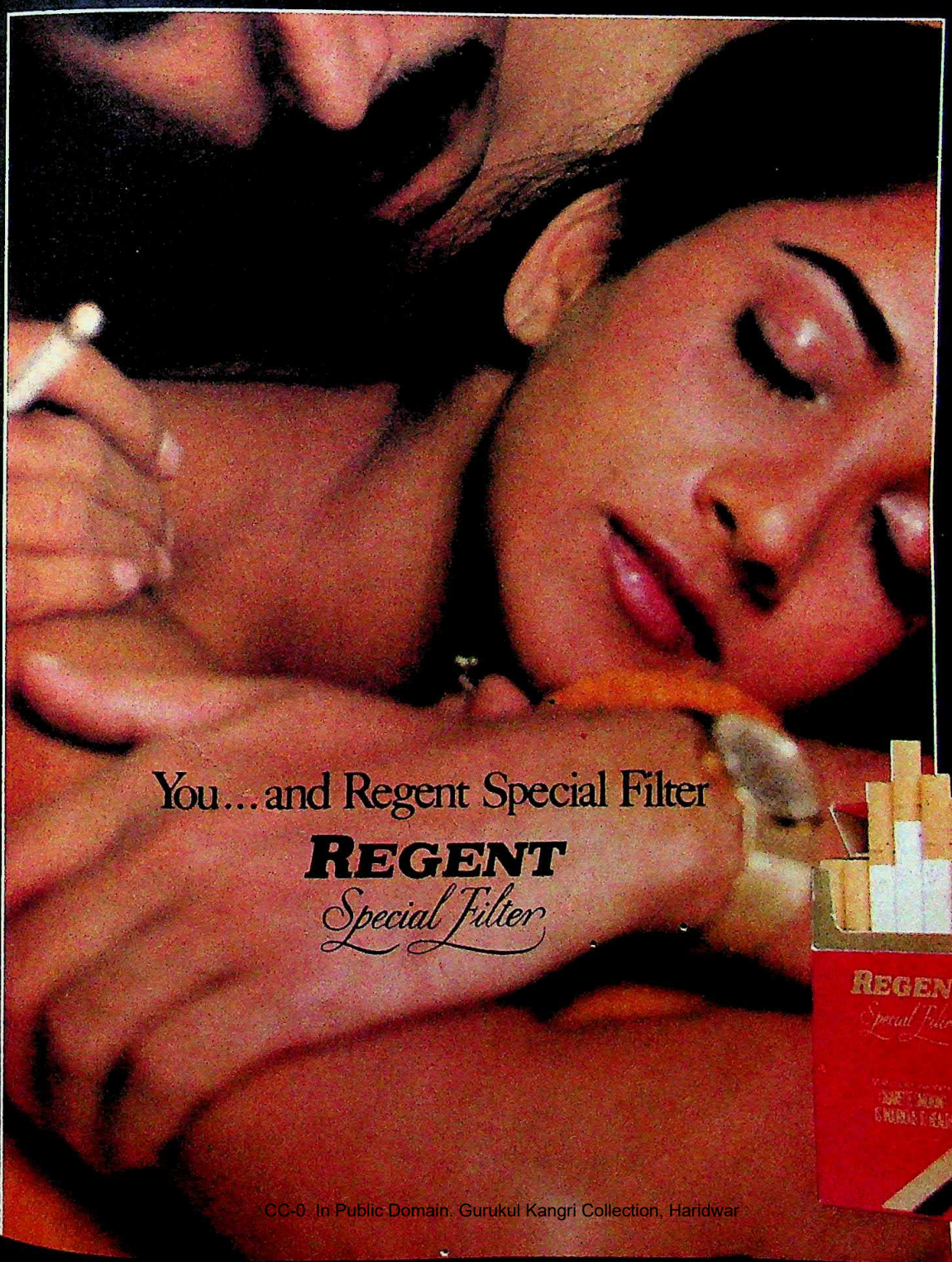
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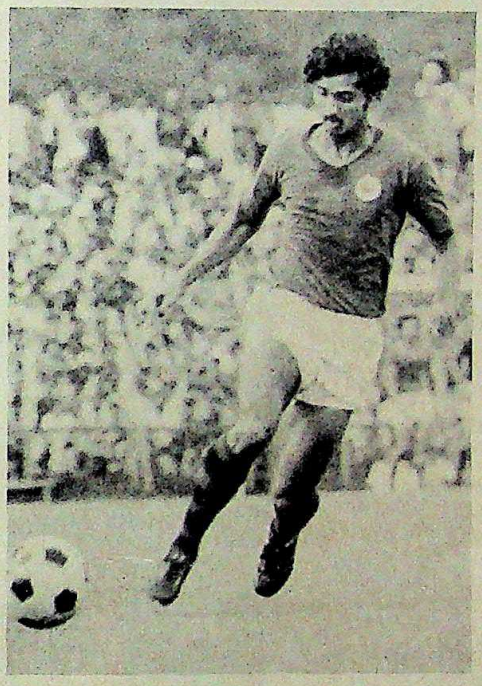
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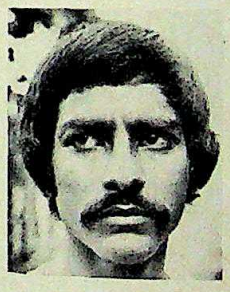
Familiar Frenzy

E LONG queues at the gates, the throated shouts and the fierce ments at tea shops and coffee e all back as Calcutta settles down ther season of football frenzy. is its accompanying tension which what keeps the Bengali ticking hot and humid Indian summer. however, nothing has changed, bulous amounts that reportedly hands during the transfer no other centre is football such a business—to the continued domi- the three big clubs. Yet the 1982 ason promises to be different from ones in at least one major for the first time the senior division feature a plethora of new faces made it to the top in such large for perhaps the first time ever in football history.

ears football lovers had been de- ew faces and though the clubs hold of youngsters they would get sidetracked by the big names. hanks to the Asian Games, most out under- ous work- ning camps eans they ticipate in ournament Games are a football thout such Bhaskar Prasun Ban- ier Pius, Manash ya, Prasanta Banerjee and Dutta whose absence has certainly glamour but not of interest as is m the crowded stands.

ur Boys: The news isn't so good sing star performers. As an offi- leading club said: "Most of the ys thought people would not turn were not playing and often black- But now it is evident that it is the to the club which draws suppor- ground irrespective of which play- ng fielded." And already it has ed that the game itself does not the big names are not around, as when Mohammedan Sporting last month 3-0 with an entirely Last year's league champion, dan Sporting lost heavily this transfer market and has practi- side apart from the Iranians, Jamshed Majid and Khabaji, who did not play in the first outing, and Shabir Ali who is attending the Asiad camp. Besides, with most of the big names now in the 28-30 age group it is doubtful whether they can continue playing meaningful football. They were found seriously wanting when pitted against the much younger and faster teams from abroad during the recent Jawaharlal Nehru tournament in Calcutta. Organisers of the game have, ever since, been seriously scouting for new talent. Replacements are needed and the current season may provide them with the right answers.







(from left) Roy, Mukherjee and Adhikary: the new stars

During the current season, however, the older players have little to worry about. Even though they are not playing for their clubs during the senior division league, they continue to be retained and draw their monthly emoluments in addition to the Rs 2,000 a month that the All India Football Federation pays them for attending the national camp. And for most of them, the clubs dole out handsome amounts. It has been reported that East Bengal club, which took a lot of beating last year, has spent around Rs 10 lakh this year to recover its lost prestige. Among those who have signed for the club this year are Indian skipper Bhaskar Ganguli. One of the reasons why the clubs have signed up internationals in spite of the fact that they would be of no help during the league is because prestigious tournaments like DCM, Rovers and Durand will take place after the Asian Games when the restriction on players will cease to exist.

Income Tax: The big clubs may also experience difficulties with the Income Tax (IT) authorities as they have been mentioned as sources of income in the IT returns filed by some of the stars. This is the first admission by players of being paid for playing. Earlier while everyone knew that the players were being paid, there was no official record simply because the cash changed hands under the table. However, with the big guns in the Income Tax Department having close relations with the authorities of major clubs —a relationship which is mutually beneficial —it is quite likely they will not have to bother much and eyes will continue to be kept shut. Last season, one of the smaller clubs had tried to get the phony amateur status of the big team players blasted through a court case, but didn't get very far, so inter-woven are the relationships between the top three, East Bengal, Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting, and the Indian Football Association (IFA) the state level apex body which is supposed to keep a close look on the clubs for smooth conduct of the game. The court put the responsibility of finding out whether a club was paying its players or not squarely on the shoulders of the IFA.

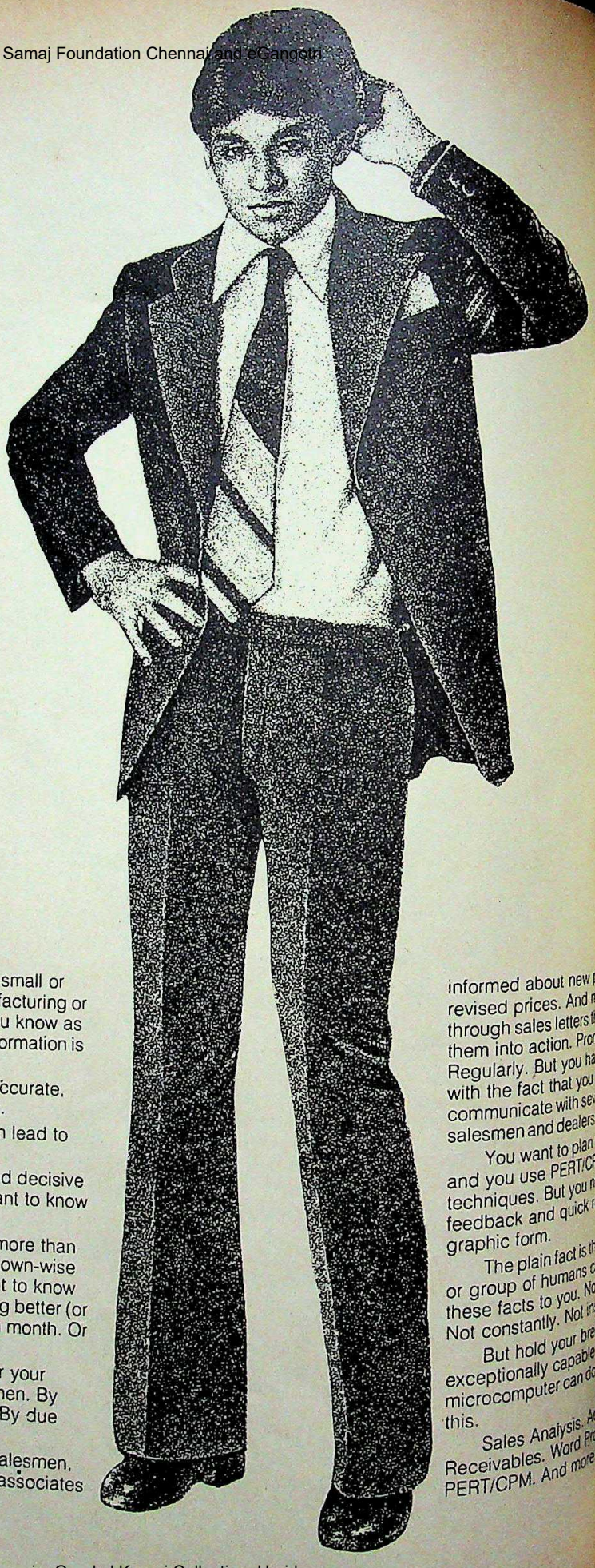
Meanwhile eyes in Calcutta are riveted on up-and-coming players like Amitabha Mukherjee of Mohun Bagan who had scored the all-important goal for the team at the Federation Cup tournament at Kozhikode earlier this year. Also in the limelight is Krishnendu Roy of the same team who had played so well for India at the Merdeka tournament but who, for inexplicable reasons, has been kept out of the Asiad camp. For East Bengal the rising players are linkman, Swapan Raut and left-winger, Arun Nath while Mohammedan Sporting, which has been almost without any star attraction this year, has been lucky to get the services of Debashish Mishra, acclaimed as this season's best midfielder and also the fast right-winger, Shankar Adhikary. These players had either played for smaller clubs previously or had signed up for one of the big three only to spend their afternoons as reserves on the sidelines. This is the first time that they have found an opportunity to display their mettle and appear to have already earned their places as new stars in Calcutta's soccer world.

—SUMANTA SEN

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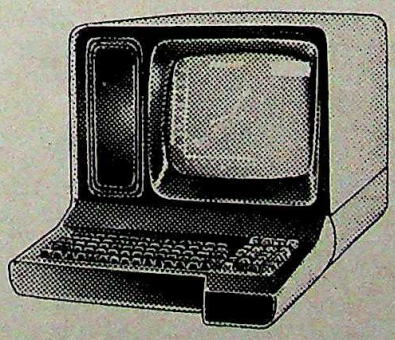
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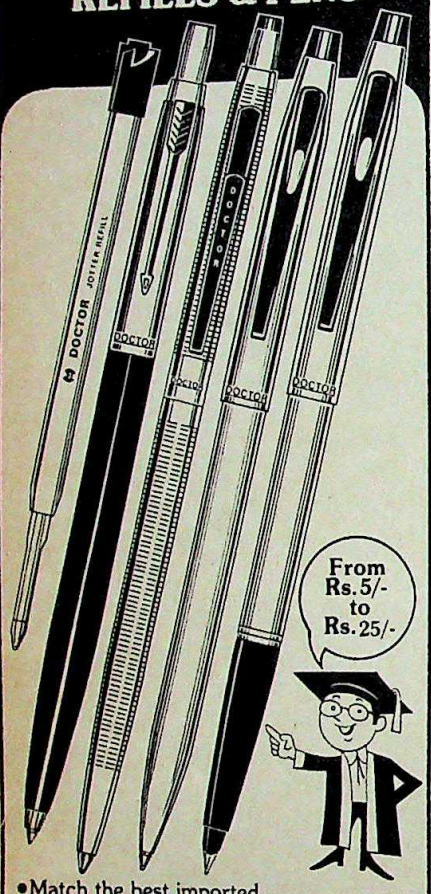
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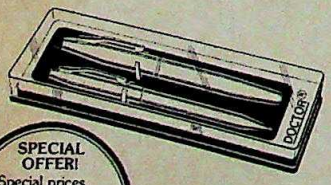
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Aimlessly Adrift

AADHARSHILA
Directed by: Ashok Ahuja
Starring: Naseeruddin Shah, Anita Kanwar and Devaki Nandan Pandey

A YOUNG graduate from the Film Institute in Pune decides first to marry the girl of his dreams, then direct the feature film of his fantasies. The two events converge coyly—newly established domestic bliss providing a frame for the young genius' bursting creative energy. Moving into their first apartment, the couple establish residence close to the Film Institute, the mecca from which inspiration will no doubt flow unabated.

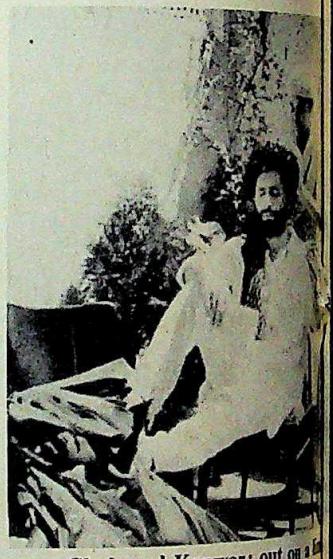
Inspiration, however, isn't the problem; in fact it seems to flow in excess, as much from the pleasure of the nuptial bed as from an assortment of the young hero's sidekick friends performing amateur dramatics at home. Finding work is much harder. Trying first to direct a few advertising shorts, the young film maker gives up in disgust, and relieves his intense creative talent—he really is bursting with the stuff—in the arms of his wife.

First Lesson: Together they manage to locate a literary work good enough for their effort: but tracking down its author is a problem. When the young man (Naseeruddin Shah) does manage to do this, the author (Devaki Nandan Pandey) makes repeated promises to offer him the filming rights. Back and forth the film maker shuttles, from Pune to Bombay and back, using up his wife's (Anita Kanwar) fixed deposits, and hoping to negotiate a reasonable price for the novel. Again and again the slightly seedy author, wonderfully played by All India Radio newsreader Devaki Nandan Pandey, puts the young film maker off. In the end, the desperate negotiations for buying the book fail, the author disappears, and the film maker returns home to his wife having learnt his first lesson in the wide, wicked world.

Not a bad idea for a first feature; and autobiographical as the material is, Ashok Ahuja could have turned out an amusing, perceptive, simple film about disillusionment of the creative instinct. Instead, he's come up with something that is tortuously long and painfully humourless, something that promotes idealism at its most pretentious. An unhealthy flavour permeates this film, even its moments of cynicism, so that excellent performers like Shah and Kanwar are left out completely in the cold.

The dialogues are worn cliches, the characters unconvincing to the point of self-indulgence. It's perfectly clear that the young man in the movie will [illegible] husband and potential film [illegible] there is a nagging naiveté about [illegible] irritating lack of intelligence and [illegible] makes him fairly incapable of [illegible] life. Similarly the wife seems to be [illegible] with such mindless adoration [illegible] husband—who is a bit of a namby-[illegible] anyway—that it only intensifies [illegible] fusion of her role and their [illegible] together.

Cliched Routine: The jokes are [illegible] ill-starred. Doing a parody [illegible] Bombay movies has in itself become [illegible] a kind of esoteric joke that breed[illegible]



Shah and Kanwar: out on a [illegible]

"art" movies. It is both self-conscious ungracious and, now that Bombay [illegible] themselves have taken to [illegible] parodying themselves, in *Aadharshila*, also hopelessly unamusing.

Then there is the length: [illegible] must be seriously wrong—or questionable least—about the film maker's art if [illegible] perform its principal function of [illegible] story; telling a story not only easily and convincingly but also with [illegible] brevity. If most first films are too long by an hour, Ahuja's is too long by an hour.

And it shows—*Aadharshila's* [illegible] begin to fidget because they haven't [illegible] or the patience to go on hearing [illegible] young man who hasn't a clue as to [illegible] will manage to both make his [illegible] keep his wife. As for director Ahuja [illegible] have to clue himself up on how [illegible] another movie—or he may end up giving new cinema a bad name.

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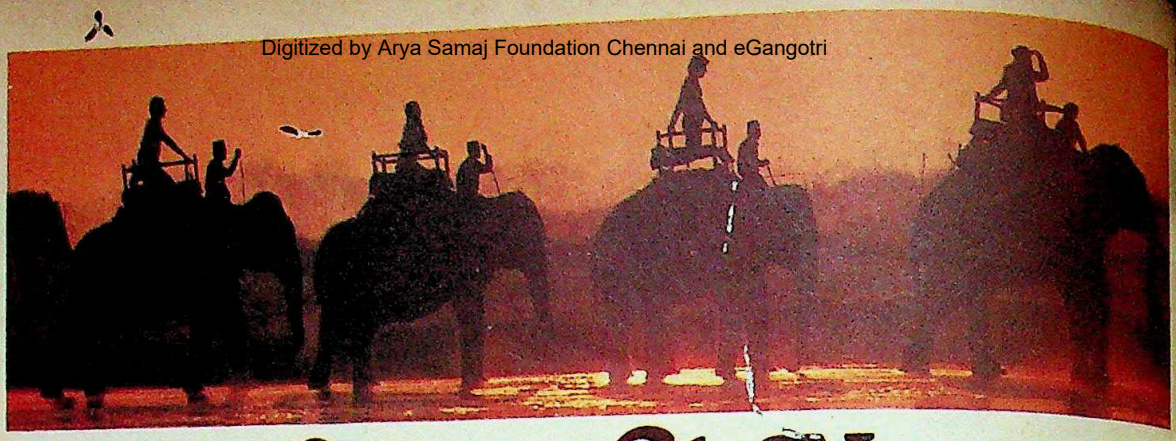
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INDIAN FILMS

ttle Of The Bulges

ITS drooling purveyors, the concoction is popularly known as Madrasi masala"; the ready-made ix of sexual gyrations and flesh-sies that has become a necessary in south Indian cinema. But one its audience that is not impressed is board in Madras and the result pitched battle between the pro-hat has, of late, developed into a war that could rival anything on

crunch was inevitable. Over the ears, south Indian cinema has been y a motley crowd of pickle sellers, rs and textile dealers who, in a fit otic abandon, have overnight be-producers with only one clear their heads—sex sells. The film ll across the south tell the story in tail. Sagging flesh, slinky cos-e and mayhem in oversized blow-minently marked with the magic Adults).

Cuts: Incensed by the overkill, Censor Board set to work with s and the result, according to the was mayhem while the censors cuts are necessary to curtail the trend. Says K.G. Ramakrishnan, nsor officer: "Our work is to the guidelines conscious of the effect in depicting gory details, sing the female anatomy, vio-superstition."

producers thought otherwise and ght called for a boycott of the sors. The boycott flopped mainly any producers are losing money of the hold-up and were busy the Information Ministry in New the producer-censor battle hav-crisis proportions, officials of the were forced to fly down to try and work out an compromise.

at will not be easy. The an film industry has in the last few years easily overtaken its wn Bombay rival with of Rs 150 crore yearly duction rate that is two-the total films produced The growth has hardly been ed one. Commercial cine-outh is badly organised

ta (left) and Jayamalani: the 'Madrasi masala'.

with little or no controls on both quality and quantity.

New Twists: The result has been a proliferation of producers with no experience or ethics all battling each other to introduce more gory gimmicks and new twists to the sex angle which is what sells the most. D. Ramanujam, president of the South Indian Film Chamber of Commerce admits candidly that there is no uniform code for film-makers. "There should be some qualification for being a producer and a code for the operation of the distributors and exhibitors if the industry is to mature in an organised manner," he says.

The better-known producers, however, are insistent that the censors have gone overboard with their scissors. G. Hanumantha Rao, president of the Film Producers Guild of South India, points to the drastic cuts in the Sivaji Ganeshan-starrer, *Tyagi*, the Tamil remake of the controversial *Meri Aawaz Suno*, and feels that censors are unduly prejudiced against Tamil films. "Censorship is senseless here. They do not mind an artiste being shown in bras and panties but object if the female is shown wet. Why is it faulted in Tamil films alone?"

But even that is not strictly true. P.R. Annamalai, Telugu film producer, incurred the censors, displeasure with his version of the Tamil film *Swargathin Thirappu Vizha*. Annamalai tried to make use of the loophole regarding dubbed films by making a Telugu version of the film which he renamed *Jayamalini*, after the buxom south Indian "sex bomb" who most personifies the "Madrasi masala". By the time his film was released, however, the censor board had revised its ruling on dubbed films and treated



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A sex scene from *Savitri*: no holds barred

's version as a separate film, sub- some wide-ranging cuts. The film ld up since December.

Problem: However, it is Telugu really pose the most problems, ey are with vulgar innuendoes, oses of sex, scantily-clad women sus scenes of heroines in panties engaged in endless cavortings e nothing to do with the story ith good cinema. The industry is by seven stars, led by new politi- N.T. Rama Rao, who produce ggering numbers. The result is mes the better films get lost in the tz and are subjected to the same est. One example is the Telugu *akshatram* which the examining anted drastically scissored but entually okayed by the revising ithout a single snip. Admitted Censor Officer Ramakrishnan: judgment are possible in tation of a broad set of guide-

er, there are signs that Tamil radually getting out of the "ma- with the advent of bright new and directors intent on tackling subtlety and professionalism. "It big producers who kick up a fuss sorship," says novelist-censor ran, "they do not want censor- ey want is the 'A' certificate from as a licence."

rast, the Malayalam cinema suf- wildly distorted publicity.

Commercial films are invariably labelled soft porn with distributors and exhibitors cashing in on the craze by providing bizarre and misleading titles on film posters. Another incentive is the large number of "sex films" that sell briskly and lucratively in the West Asian sheikhdoms. Lately, the censors have started coming down hard on posters as well, with a number of posters having been blacked out where there are objectionable statements made.

Succumbing: The Kannada film scene, which produced such distinguished filmmakers like B.V. Karanth, Girish Karnad and Girish Kasaravalli, has succumbed as easily to the sex and sensation syndrome. *Parajitha* was subjected to some major cuts by the censors which producer S.N. Parthanath refused to carry out and the film is now awaiting a decision by the Information Ministry. Says a censor: "It is shocking that good directors like Siddalingaiah (who directs the film) are driven to desperation by depicting gruesome violence and unnecessary sex." Retorts Siddalingaiah: "How can there be a cabaret without breast jerks? The censors do not look at the totality. If I make the cuts they suggest people will spit in my face not theirs."

The current conflict between the censors and producers is not likely to be resolved until the six-member tribunal recommended by Parliament is set up. Under the recommendations, the tribunal will try and resolve any similar disputes before taking the matter to the ministry for final arbitration. Meanwhile, the censor tribe in the south is on the increase with regional centres are being set-up in Bangalore and Hyderabad.

But in equal proportions is the rise in the number of sex symbols that are hastily being recruited into the fold. The latest is the aptly-named "Silky Smita", a shapely star who has been drawing rave audiences and seems to be a worthy inheritor of Jayamalini's mantle. The battle of the sexes is on in right earnest and nobody is awaiting the outcome with more avid interest than south Indian cinema audiences.

—AMARNATH K. MENON in Madras

N.T. Rama Rao and Rati Agnihotri in *Thirugu Leni Manishi*: daggers drawn



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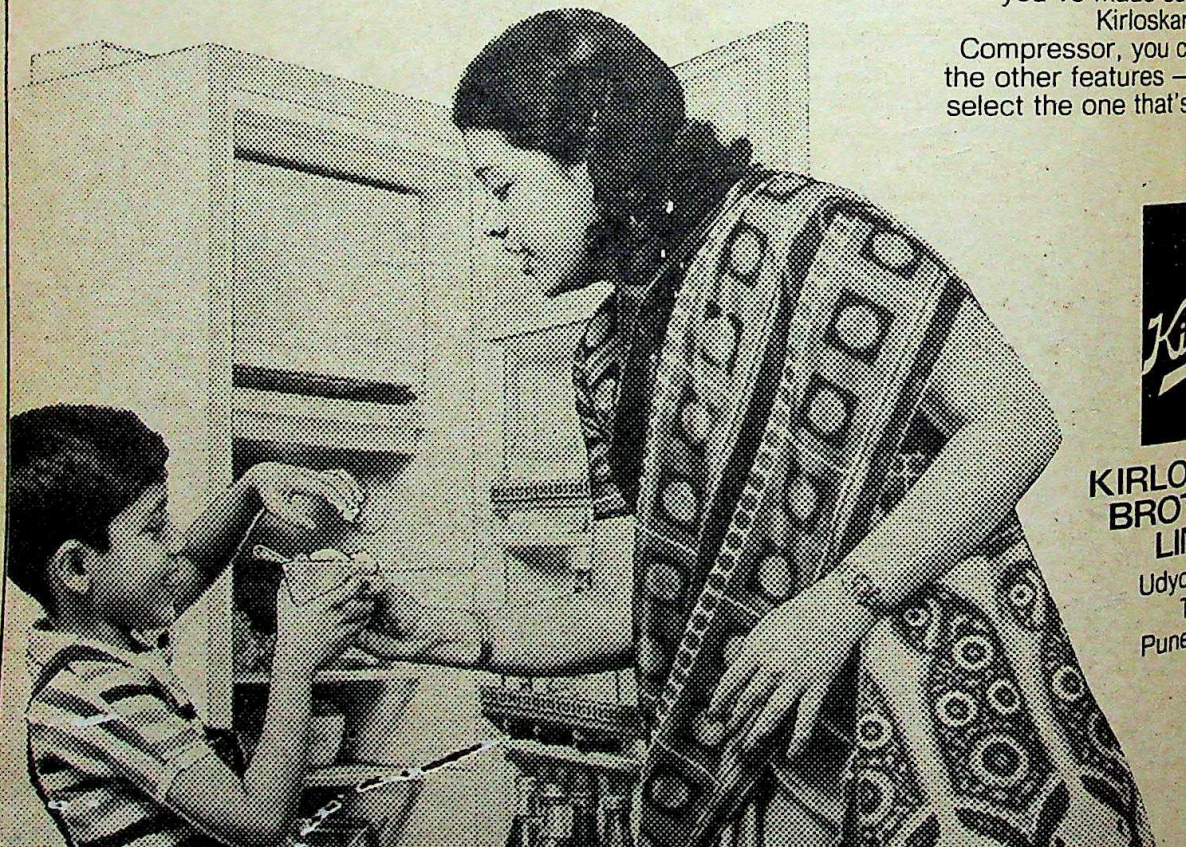


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lised Encounters



THEY call it *hikmat-mali*, the art of favours done and received by the officers and 'other ranks' of the army. The favours are never mentioned, only implied, and are one way of getting round the red tape of useless bureaucratic diktats of Indus-I is that General Kiran ad, a very senior officer of the Major K.Y.T. (Kite) Nadkar, a quietly successful existence utside Belgaum. Garud is con- the growing influence in the oup of young, armchair officers f staff General Shamlal Behl. e under a cloud himself for en bread with a Pakistani ge- during the first Indo-Pakistan nd wants to find evidence in a hich could stop Behl and his

ntage Malgonkar, writing of a he trauma of the Chinese crisis k India's defence establishment tions. A retired colonel himself, writing is best described as e uses his well-tried talent with se to evoke the quiet solidarity of the Indian Army. Nadkar is f the gentlemanly officer with nse of fair play and his even glee at having done the depart- officers out of 138 bottles of s whisky at the time of par- redentials thus established, to work on behalf of Garud. As he moves deeper and de- dark tunnel of intrigue, as he red British army officer, Brian Belgaum, as he shuttles from ombay to Delhi and back, as he ister father-in-law to take ac- arud's inquiry commission, als more and more of the infor- d balances that make the army. ehls, a basically decent insti- nal Pulla Reddy is one such elligence officer out of favour ers that be, he nevertheless joins adkar and Garud to expose the achinations of Behl, to lay bare ecret of the seemingly impover- st, to choke off a conduit of formation to the Pakistanis.

angling of the espionage skein is h, though. Time and again, lets the pungent odour of a

BANDICOOT RUN
by MANOHAR MALGONKAR
Vision Books
Price: Rs 60; Pages: 340

power-hungry officers' clique come through the kid-boy flavour of his writing. The new type of careerist officer in the army is exemplified by Behl—"arrogant, mean and ruthless, possibly a little mad", a coward who comes quite openly with a present for Gilchrist so that he can get out of going to the front in the Middle East during World War II. As Gilchrist tells him flatly: "You obviously don't want to do what soldiers are required to do: fight. So why call yourself one?"

Last Laugh: Gilchrist knows he's made a mortal enemy and, indeed, when the British officer is court-martialled for cooking postings, Behl is one of those who give evidence against Gilchrist. But the careworn old Britisher, living out his threadbare life in Belgaum, has the last laugh: he traps Behl into committing treason by flourishing the evidence of that cowardice in his face and India's most powerful soldier becomes a pawn in Pakistani hands: the last, potent kick of a dying empire, administered by a "sahib who had fallen" that the easy going Nadkar has to thwart before it does any damage.

Nadkar has his doubts, of course. At one point in the novel he asks himself: "Didn't they realise that whatever they were fighting was not something that could be defeated by a few experts in regimental *hikmat-mali* banding together?". But the regiment comes above everything; as Nadkar's old colonel in the Satpura Regiment had told him: "Young man, you're with the regiment for life—till you die... Even if you happen to leave the army, you still have a claim on the regiment. What is just as true, the regiment has a claim on you."

The real attraction of the book lies precisely in the way this claim is brought to fruition. The plot—espionage, blackmail, treason, in three words—is rather anaemic compared to the lurid but technically proficient stuff being churned out in the west. But Malgonkar's understated style, crammed with idiom, triumphs over the story's limitations right until the last, civilised encounter when officers and gentlemen sit in informal judgement on an officer who is not quite a gentleman. *Hikmat-mali zindabad*!

—JAGANNATH DUBASHI

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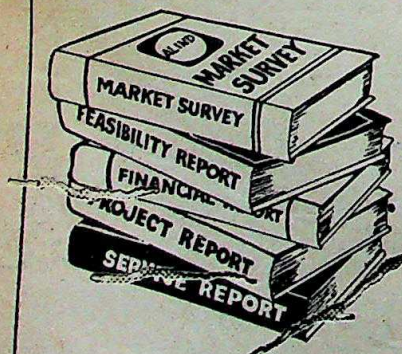
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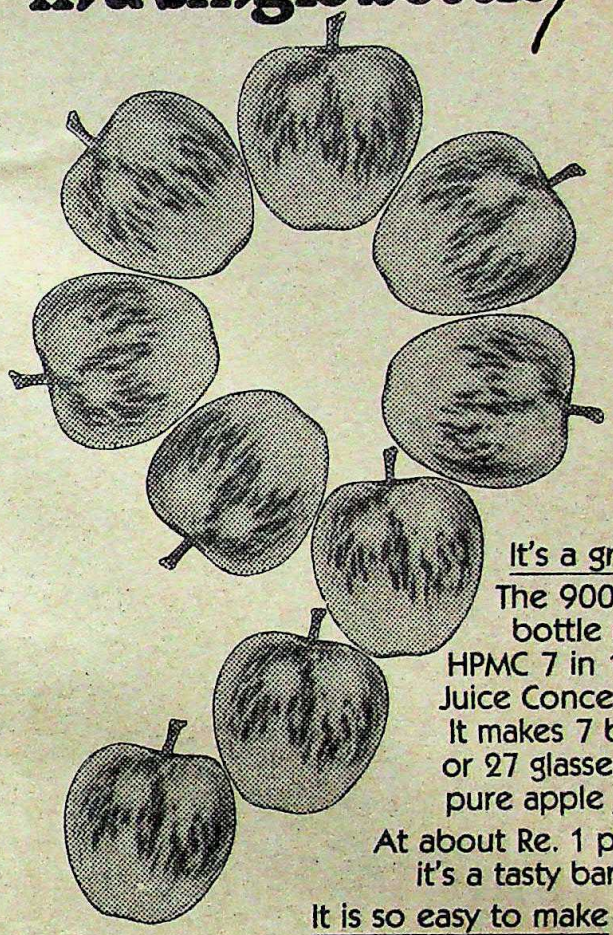
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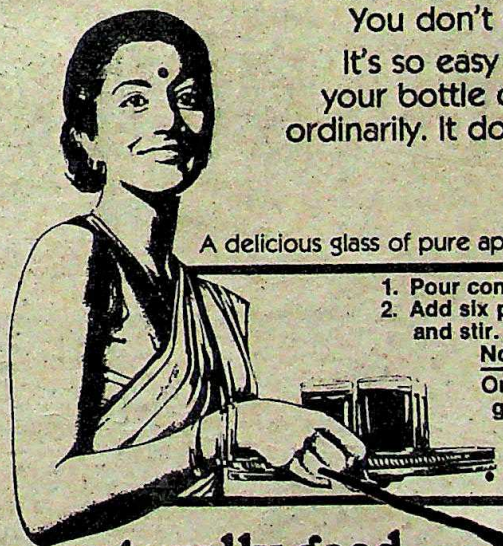
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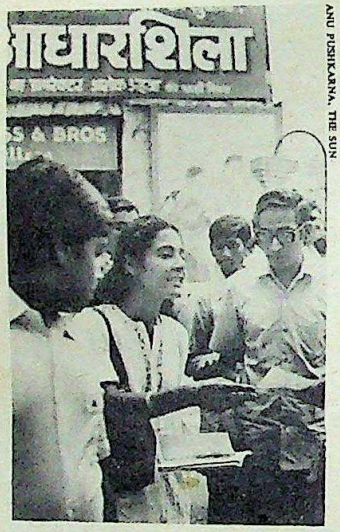


Kapil Dev: pension scheme

■ Every cricketer, even that one-man demolition squad, **Kapil Dev**, has to face that traumatic day when he hangs up his boots. Kapil, at 22, still has plenty of fire within him but he obviously has a good head above his brawny shoulders. While Kapil was wreaking his usual havoc against England at Lord's last fortnight, his rather large family back in Chandigarh were putting the finishing touches to Kapil's post-cricket pension scheme—a deluxe hotel-cum-restaurant in the heart of the city.

As a cushion against a rainy day when his cricketing career is over, the hotel seems like a pretty good investment. Says Ramesh Dev, Kapil's brother and partner in the venture; "It is a family business and whenever Kapil has the time he's decided to devote it to the hotel." Kapil, of course, has already earned a phenomenal amount from the game apart from the advertising lolly for plugging shaving cream, motorbikes and stereo systems. The hotel, scheduled for a Diwali opening, has a restaurant called, naturally, 'The Sixer', which will no doubt turn out to be a big hit. A boundary-burger anybody?

■ There's no publicity like self publicity. And proving the point last fortnight was **Anita Kunwar**, Delhi's well-known stage actress and the heroine of the award-winning film *Adharshila* who set about selling **Ashok Ahuja**'s magnum opus by word of mouth. Kunwar resolutely posted herself outside the capital's movie theatre



ANU PUSHKARNA, THE SUN

Kunwar: self help

dusky and attractive actress was still around. But Kunwar had obviously vanished after having done her good deed for the day.

■ The Bombay film industry is clearly a case of art imitating art. Each time a tinsel town inhabitant starts a new trend, the rest just have to follow. With Shashi Kapoor's advent into the realm of "art films" can **Shatrughan Sinha** be far behind? Apparenty not. Last fortnight, Sinha launched his first independent production venture directed by award-winning documentary film maker, **Lok Sen Lalwani**. The film is about the oppressed miners of Dhanbad, not far from the screen heavy's native town in Bihar and is, according to Sinha, his "effort to make a moving art film".

Whether it moves remains



SHYAM AURANGABADKAR

Sinha: moving on

to be seen but Sinha has shunned the big names except himself, that is, and plumped for the obscure starlet **Rameshwari**, to play opposite him.

True to form, Sinha has already started talking in terms of his 'contribution' as a producer and the impact his film will have. Said he: "I want to make good films which can earn international fame at Festivals and make me feel proud. I am here to make a film to be remembered by the audiences." Famous last words, those.

■ Sleuths, specially of the income tax variety, are generally on the opposite side of the fence to those in the entertainment industry. But one of them who has managed to straddle that fence pretty successfully is Bombay's Income Tax Commissioner **T.P. Jhunjunwala**, who has written, produced, directed and acted in [illegible] which has been touring Bombay and neighbouring [illegible] and last fortnight was in the process of being recorded on video. The recording done by Weston Television of Jhunjunwala's social satire *Bande Saste Mille Hain*, only for export and is expected to sell for $25 per cassette. Coming by the play's second early last month drew [illegible] pressive crowds including industry stars like Raj Kapoor's son Randhir, Ashok Kumar and lesser luminaries. Kapoor was so impressed he was overheard telling Jhunjunwala: "It needs just [illegible] scenes switched around [illegible] could be a great film." And went on to make a bid for rights for the play.

SIGN POSTS

■ **Died:** Jaimini Dewan, of a heart attack in Bombay. Dewan, a famous film producer was also the former president of the Indian Motion Picture Production Association.

■ **Awarded:** The Lady Tata Memorial Trust Annual International awards for scientific research for 1982 to Dr Abrams and Dr Dwandaraj in the US and a research grant to Dr A.R. Venkitraman of [illegible]

■ **Awarded:** The Kalakar awards for outstanding contributions to actor Marc [illegible] actresses Shabana and [illegible] Shaukat Azmi; director-producer Vinod Pande and film journalist Devyani [illegible]

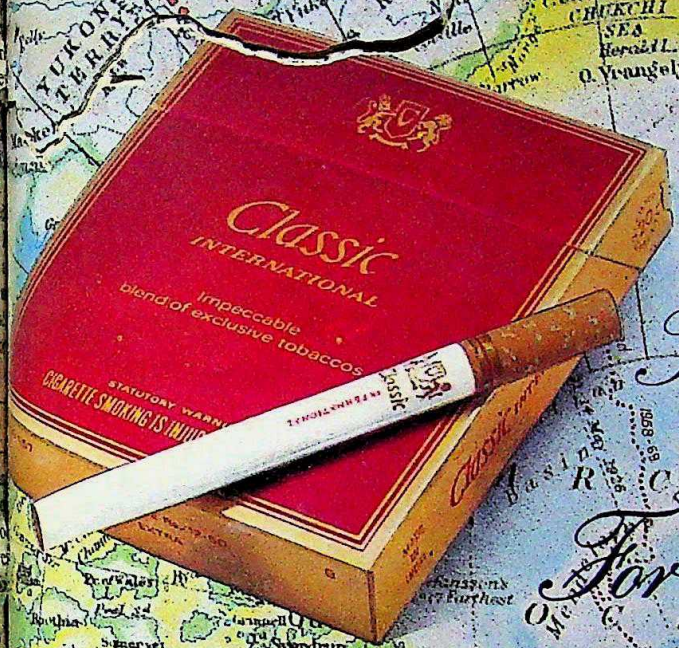
Jhunjunwala (left) and Kapoor: extra income



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[illegible] POLI[illegible]

AS A PHENOMENON, business journalism of quality is India's. The country's leading business dailies are relatively young, having first appeared less than two decades ago, compared with the national dailies, some of which are more than a century old. Business magazines are even newer, the older of the two having started in 1978. All of which is amply reflected in the generally uncertain relationship that exists between media and business. Most businessmen and industrialists are unwilling to loosen up before journalists, and talk business details, facts, strategies and intentions in the manner of their counterparts in the Western economies. Larger business houses in particular prefer to maintain a low profile. Acutely aware that their vastness and growth has over the years been held against them—numerous restrictions curtail their freedom of action—they can hardly be blamed for being cautious. But it does retard the growth of popular understanding of business news and developments.

Thus when INDIA TODAY *decided to do a cover story on the phenomenon of corporate growth, it ran into a gamut of such problems. For one, businessmen have simply not been willing to part with enough information to determine exactly who the high fliers have been. For another, some obvious growth kings were unwilling to cooperate at all. People react to publicity often in unpredictable ways. Most would be happy to be seen on the cover of a major publication. Not so Vittal Mallya, who is one of the country's most remarkable top performers. Company policy stood in the way of his responding positively to requests spread over several months for an interview.*

Yet, the story compelled attention in spite of these odds because it shows how much of the griping that mars the relationship between the Government and the private sector is so much posturing. Undeniably, hamstrung as it is by cumbersome and restrictive conditions, the Indian private sector operates in less than ideal conditions. Even so, as the phenomenon of the growth kings demonstrates, it is possible to grow, and grow impressively. There are companies who have successfully navigated the obstacles, gauged the Government's mood and perceptively grasped the opportunities of a changing economic landscape to achieve outstanding growth in the last decade or so. The four men picked for the cover to illustrate this are far from being the only industrialists who have grown rapidly. They may not even be the most impressive. But they are symbolic of a new breed of entrepreneur and manager in all parts of the industrial spectrum, from the largest to the smallest, who have struck out, endured the difficulties and proved to be an exception to the rule.

The story was put together by Business Editor T.N. NINAN, *who coordinated the efforts of several correspondents who filed information for the story from all four corners of the country. Apart from Ninan, the main effort for the story came from Correspondents* CHANDER UDAY SINGH *in Bombay and* RAJ CHENGAPPA *in Bangalore. The cover story is Ninan's first for the magazine in the 14 weeks he has been with* INDIA TODAY.

PRINTING schedules and its fortnightly periodicity make it difficult for INDIA TODAY *to keep a close watch on major sporting events such as the cricket Test series in England which came to an end last fortnight. In order to give readers an overview of the series, the magazine commissioned former India captain and ace bowler Bishen Singh Bedi to write his personal assessment of the series.*

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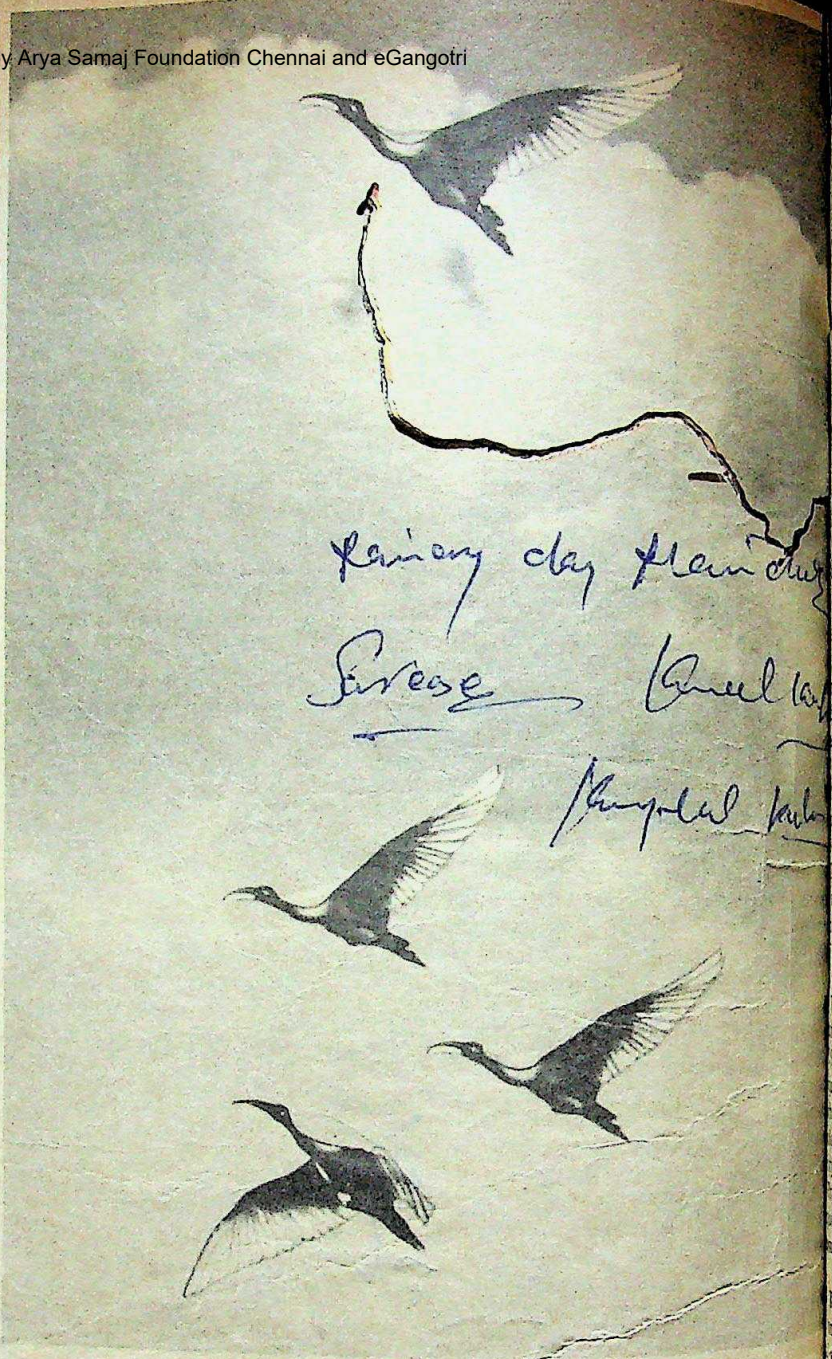
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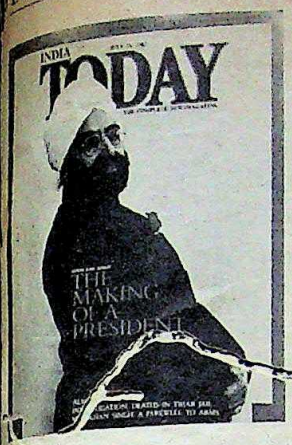
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SIDENT OR RUBBER STAMP?

The cover story "The Making Of A ident" (INDIA TODAY, July 15) reflected ews of every thinking Indian. The ation of Zail Singh as President of bodes ill for this country.

ad *Satyendra Kumar Singh*

g nominating Zail Singh for the ncy, the prime minister has taken a ar insurance policy beginning July 25. The policy will pay off if anything ard happens in the 1985 General ons.

D.R. Gulati

This move has revealed Mrs Gandhi as paralleled tactician. She has neutralised ingh, who has been a trouble-maker in b and smoothened the way for ra Singh. She has also proved her ar credentials and stood up for a mi- community and best of all, got herself sident who will do her bidding estioningly.

-Sirsi *Dr G.N. Sharma*

The article has reinforced the view that ly quality Mrs Gandhi appreciates is nd constant loyalty to her personally. situation makes clear that an honest and t man has no place in our society and up as the sacrificial lamb.

Vijay Kumar Anand

Against all accepted norms, we are foisted upon with a President who will ly pander to the ruling party's whims.

rah *Dilip Kumar Porel*

If the only way that Punjab can be ved is by choosing the President from gest the Sikhs, why not an intelligent arbane one like Swaran Singh?

know *Seema Alawi*

YAL TRADITION

Reading the report "The Gilded ney" (July 15) I have come to the conclusion that the life-style of the head of the state in India has not changed since the days of the Mughals. The pomp and splendour of Rashtrapati Bhavan compares very well with all the reports I have read of the great Mughals.

New Delhi *Jai Singh Bika*

SINS OF THE FATHERS

The parents of the bride are equally responsible for the dowry deaths ("Until Death Do Us Part", July 15) for not making sure that the girl is economically independent either by training her for a career or by giving her an equal share in the parental property. It is the parents who mould girls into submissive beings, ready to give in to any form of suppression and unable to function without male protection. They also bring them up to believe that after marriage their place is in the husband's house no matter how tortuous the circumstances may be. By agitating for the Anti-Dowry Bill women's organisations are barking up the wrong tree—what they should fight for is equal opportunities and equal rights in property.

Jorhat *Dr Balamani Bezbaruah*

ARMS AND THE MAN

After reading "A Farewell To Arms" (July 15) I felt it was not the surrender of the dacoit Malkhan Singh but that of the Madhya Pradesh Government. The presence of the chief minister and all the accompanying fanfare was against all acceptable norms.

Jaipur *H.S. Sangha*

■ It is a pity that in India dacoits who have murdered innocent people in cold blood are accorded grand receptions and made heroes while the police who have fought them are ignored.

Pune *Rahul Chandrawarkar*

KILLING CURES

I was shocked to read of the disgraceful state of Kanpur's hospitals ("Kill Or Cure?" July 15). The entire blame for this lies with the Government which does not care whether their hospitals are disease curing or spreading centres. What kind of socialism is this where the most basic health care cannot be provided to the people?

New Delhi *Dr Arun Sethi*

CONCRETE PROOF

■ "Race Against Time" (June 30) gave a panoramic view of the Asian Games. Not only are we racing against time, but also against the technology and talent of other nations.

Bhubaneswar *Chiranjibi Routray*

■ What is the use of racing against time to construct world-class [illegible] which will become white elephants of quarry [illegible] were hundreds of trees were cut to make way for all the construction, thereby destroying the master plan for Delhi and harming its environment forever? Are not most of the labourers being paid less than even the minimum wage and hasn't bonded labour been used at some of the sites? Isn't the social price we are paying for the Games too high? By highlighting only the technological and organisational achievements and by side-stepping these darker issues the article fails to bring out Asiad's two sides.

New Delhi *Aseem Srivastava*

■ The article is a fair and factual report and is concrete proof that we can achieve targets if we really want to.

Bombay *Genevieve Saldhana*

■ After reading the article I wondered where all this *tamasha* will lead us. India is facing far more important problems and has to solve them before embarking on something as wasteful as the Asian Games.

Mysore *Verghese Alexander*

■ The accolades showered on the men responsible for the Asiad are probably justified but it also proves that our politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats and industrialists can work swiftly and efficiently on one condition—that the audience for their achievements is a foreign one.

Allahabad *Archana Jaiswal*

■ It is unfortunate that Indian sports goods manufacturers are being neglected. When we are able to provide indigenously all our other equipment, why should we have to import sporting goods?

Rengali Dam *Jaydip Mishra*

■ The article left out the fact that hundreds of telex, trunk and teleprinter lines are being laid in the capital for the media.

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia *Gregory Saldhana*

■ At last the Government is giving sport the priority treatment it deserves. Participation in sports is one of the few things that can train citizens to be mentally, physically and socially alert and healthy.

Patiala *Dr Babu*

THE SEAMY SIDE

"Asiad's Other Side" (June 30) made interesting reading. The Government has created an ocean with the taxpayers' money and millionaires are dipping into it in order to become billionaires. And nobody spares a thought for the millions living under the poverty line.

Lucknow *Dhiresh Bahadur*

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■ The [illegible] part of the article is the delay in the completion of the hotel projects in spite of their most favoured status as far as getting materials for construction. Because of their irresponsible behaviour the country will lose out on a great deal of foreign exchange in the form of tariff during the Games.

Pune *J.D. Adhia*

IDENTIFYING THE VILLAIN

Even a schoolchild can conclude that the main villain of the resettlement row ("Cracking The Whip", June 30) is Article 370 of the Constitution which grants Kashmir special and semi-autonomous status. This is behind the trouble as well as the arrogance of the state's chief minister who calls the Centre's representatives, the representatives of India. Until we rectify this part of the Constitution, Kashmir will remain a problem.

Hooghly *Ashok Kumar Pandey*

■ Article 370 plays into the hands of communalists like Sheikh Abdullah. Kashmir's accession to India is irrevocable and more important, unconditional. Anyone who questions it should be tried for treason.

Dombivili *R.R. Shanbag*

■ The Resettlement Bill is anti-national and highly provocative given the delicate balance being maintained between Hindus and Muslims. Sheikh Abdullah should consider it in the wider national perspective.

Madras *K.V. Rajagopalan*

■ When Sheikh Abdullah asserts that he will fight Hindu communalism does he check his own record regarding Muslim communalism. Are Hindus in Kashmir happy? Are they treated on par with Muslims? Let the Sheikh put his own house in order before venturing outside.

Agra *S.C. Mathur*

■ The article was totally in favour of the Muslims. It seems that in India in order to prove one's secular credentials all one has to do is defend a minority, whether it is justifiable or not. And the Sheikh's policy of divide and rule is absolutely indefensible.

Bombay **Sandeep Balani**

MISTAKEN ANCESTRY

There were some mistakes in the article "Monumental Splendour" (June 30) on the palaces of Hyderabad. I had said that the Begumpet Palace was built by my wife's ancestors but it was printed that it was built by mine. Also the present owners are living in the palace and not in a small outhouse as mentioned in the article.

Secunderabad *Ahmed Yar Khan*

MAKING THINGS CLEAR

The item "A Costly Error" (Trade Winds, June 30) makes clear that INDIA TODAY has been misled since NEI took no part in the negotiations in connection with the coal-mining project linked to the Rihand Super Thermal Power Project. The comments about NEI are therefore totally incorrect and unwarranted. NEI Projects Ltd, a subsidiary of NEI, are the leaders of the British consortium of engineering firms and have entered into a framework agreement with NTPC for the Rihand project, which is being carried out quite separately from the coal-mining project.

C.R. Thompson
Chairman,
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TIGER TALES

The statement in the article "Taming The Tigers" (June 30) that the organisation has killed top Tamil leaders is not justified. To the best of my knowledge the Tigers have so far killed only top police personnel assigned to track them down. And why should Tamil sympathy for this cause be ascribed to "chauvinism". The surge of fraternal feeling for the Tigers in Tamil Nadu is natural and indeed world-wide. Palestinians find sanctuary in neighbouring Arab states, Namibians and South Africans with their neighbours, and Irish nationalists in the Irish Republic. And I am sure that in none of these countries would the refugees be chained and led through the streets as these Tigers were in Tamil Nadu.

Somanur *P. Padmanabhan*

■ It has been mentioned that the all-party meet was organised by the Murasili Manch. It was organised by the Kamaraj Congress and the DMK did not participate.

Kumbakonam *T. Shanmugah*

HORNS OF A DILEMMA

The report on the rhinos of Kaziranga, "Hidebound" (June 30) is misleading. In 1980, a special study group set up by the Wildlife Board considered the possibility of translocating some of these animals to Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Though I had opposed the transfer to some of the sanctuaries, I had said that two or three rhinos could be sent to Jaldapara in West Bengal where protective measures are satisfactory and environmental conditions similar.

Another point missed out is that though the Assamese need cultivable land they have gladly given up large stretches to the rhinos whose ideal habitat is paddy land. They also suffer the annual destruction to their crops by rhinos who stray too far from the reserve. It is unfair then to expect the people of Assam to give away these animals to states for free.

Gauhati *P.C. G[illegible]*
Former chief conserv[illegible] of forests, A[illegible]

AT WHOSE COST?

The article "Predatory Pressure" (30) makes clear that over-enthusiasm bad as a lack of interest. Wildlife servation cannot be carried out at the human beings. The article ends by s that the tigers never had it so good. I was also true of the Indian homo sap

Paramakudi *C. Parthasa[illegible]*

OFF TARGET

If the reviewer is going to judge a like *Aadharshila* ("Aimlessly Adrift" 30) by the audience reaction and come the theatre feeling that the movie co itself to film making, then maybe it is ti him to seek a different profession.

New Delhi *Mathew [illegible]*

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST

It would be better if you did not ind the hunger for publicity of people suc Protima Bedi ("Eye-catchers", June Why flaunt the "great love" of people her and Rajni Patel which probably ca misery to his widow and children?

Bombay *P.J.S. Rama[illegible]*

■ What is so great about the relation between Protima Bedi and Rajni Patel just plain, simple and sordid adultery. affair is being glamorised because the pe concerned are celebrities, among ordi people it would be condemned.

Bangalore *Gogi Raghava[illegible]*

FOLLOWING PRECEDENTS

Why is there such an uproar about conduct of G.D. Tapase ("Govern Disgrace", June 15)? After all he is following the precendent laid down President N. Sanjiva Reddy when he appo ted Charan Singh who could not prove majority even once in the Lok Sabha. goes to show that you can't win them

Arun Ku[illegible]

Padrauna

THIRD CLASS CITIZENS

"Back To The Burkha" (June 19 tragic. But the Koran does sanction secondary place of women in society. W is truly terrible is the state of non-Mu women in an Islamic country. Denied r because they are women, they are not assured of the protection that is extende Muslim women. It is a blessing in dis that there are so few "infidels" in that l the pure.

A. C[illegible]

Houston, USA

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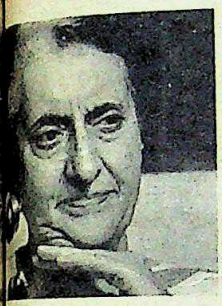
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COVER STORY: In a lack-lustre field, they've been the high-fliers. Rising out of relative obscurity, industrialists Dhirubhai Ambani, K.N. Modi, H.P. Nanda and Vittal Mallya have stamped their successes on an otherwise forgettable industrial decade, emphasising dramatically that for those who dare there are no limits to growth. An exhaustive report on the growth highways of Indian industry. **Page 94**



OPINION POLL: Continuing the series of quarterly IMRB-INDIA TODAY polls, the survey conducted in 15 key Indian cities towards the end of June 1982 took in a total of 6,512 electors. Ranging from Mrs Gandhi's popularity, the law and order situation, defectors, the prime minister's impending visit to the US and the USSR and, of course the political fracas in Haryana, the poll covers considerable ground. **Page 17**



CURRENT EVENTS: All indications are that the impending four-day US visit by Mrs Indira Gandhi is destined to end in an anticlimax. An overdue gesture from the Reagan Administration, the invitation is intended not so much to discuss Indo-Pak-US relations or India's policy on Afghanistan, but is a symbolic recognition by the US of India's independence in the pursuit of its foreign policy interests. A report on what to expect from the visit. **Page 22**



SPECIAL FEATURE: Last fortnight, a scathing and exhaustive report published in the *Indian Express*, authored by Arun Shourie, kicked up considerable dust in the first few days of the opening session of the Parliament. The report raked up a controversial oil deal struck in February 1980 by top Congress(I) officials and the disappearance of a file relating to the deal. An extensive report on the deal and those involved in it. **Page 52**



INVESTIGATION: In a chilling and bizarre series of incidents, 23 innocent eye patients have been blinded by quacks in Rajkhera, Lalpur and Kheroli villages of Dholpur district of Rajasthan. Although the incidents began as far back as February last, the official machinery only got wind of it last fortnight. An in-depth report on the horrifying incidents. **Page 90**



SPORTS: Indian cricket has essentially been an endless story of ups and downs. The just-concluded tour of England was definitely one of the downs. One man who watched with more than professional interest was the former Indian captain, Bishen Singh Bedi. With his vast experience, Bedi was the ideal choice to cover the series for INDIA TODAY. His report. **Page 138**

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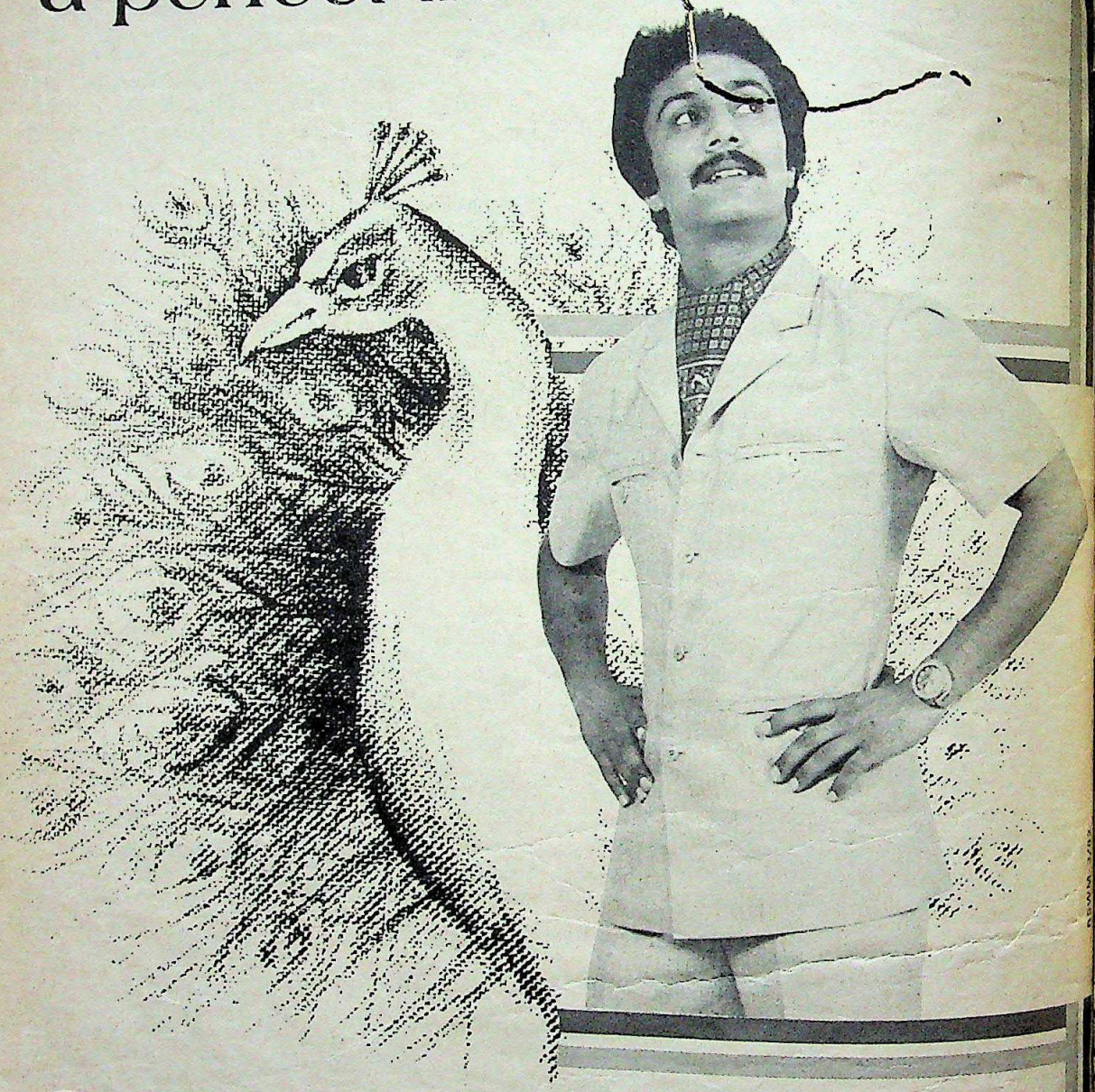
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From concept to reality,
a perfect transition.

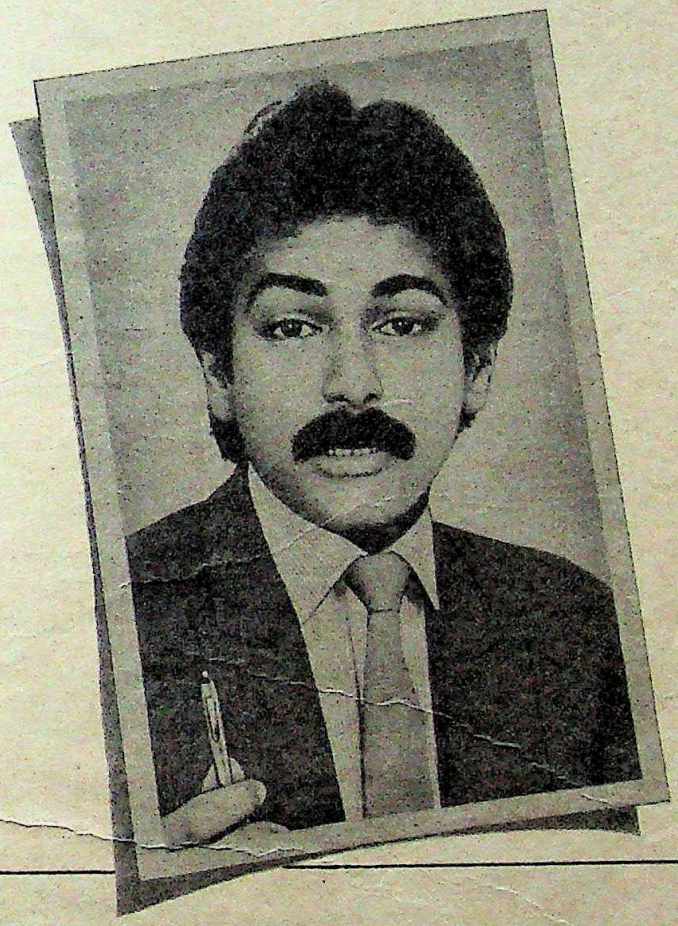


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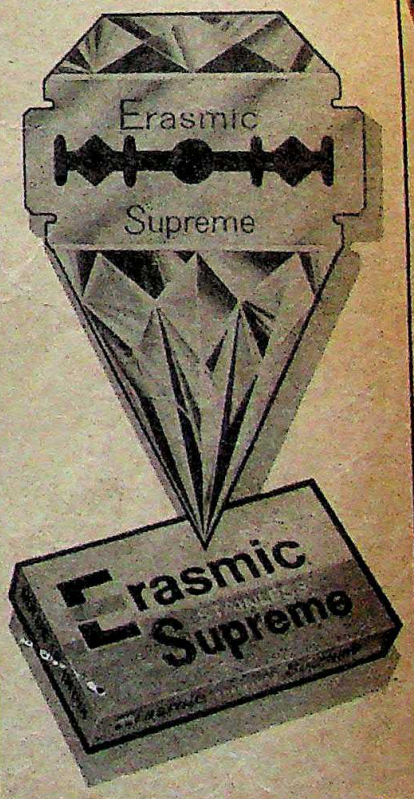
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"I don't believe a man has to be
heard to be seen.
Or wear a musical digital watch.
I believe in an appearance
that's personal.
A look that says it all without
having to say a word...



But first,
a super-smooth shave
to give me the edge."

Erasmic Supreme
The blade with the diamond edge.



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FINANCIAL IMBROGLIO

FINANCE Minister Pranab Mukherjee does not seem to be getting his way in key postings within his ministry. The Prime Minister's Secretariat has overruled Mukherjee in three cases in recent weeks: in the appointment of R.K. Kaul, additional secretary in the banking division, as secretary of the Finance Commission; of Textile Secretary A.K. Dutt as banking secretary; and the promotion of P.K. Basu, director-general of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, from the rank of additional secretary to secretary. Basu is likely to be shifted out of the ministry and his place in the upgraded post taken by an officer who has been rejected thrice recently for senior postings. The Public Enterprises Selection Board found him unsuitable for two top public sector posts, while the Union Public Services Commission rejected him for the post of director-general, technical development. P.C. Alexander, principal secretary to the prime minister, is understood to have virtually vetoed the finance minister's suggestion in all three cases.

SPORTING CHANGES

THE FORMATION of a separate 'Sports Authority of India' is being seriously considered at the concerned levels. The construction of the various sports complexes for the Asiad has apparently sparked off the move since it gives India a permanent sports infrastructure to hold international events (India is a leading contender for the Afro-Asian Games in 1983). Rather than let the stadia lie vacant, a sports authority would be the ideal answer to coordinate efforts and lobby for international meets. If the move fructifies, the man tipped to head the organisation is Ram Niwas Mirdha, deputy chairman of the Asian Games Special Organising Committee.

GROOMING A CHIEF

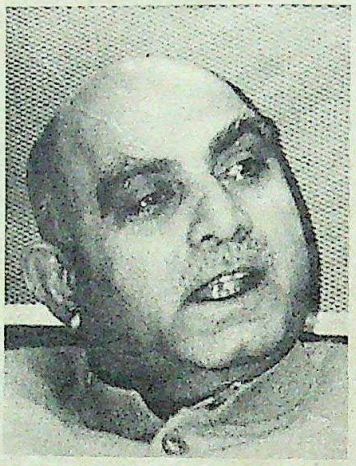
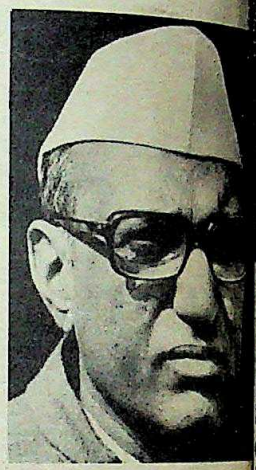
SOME major changes in the military hierarchy are in the offing. According to reliable sources, the grooming of the next chief of army staff is shortly to begin. The man tipped for the takeover is Lt-General S.K. Sinha, general officer commanding-in-chief, Western Command. Sinha, it is reported, will shortly be shifted to New Delhi to take over as vice-chief of army staff while the present vice-chief, Lt-General Sethna, will switch places and take over as GOC-in-C, Western Command. That will give Sinha enough time to get attuned to Delhi's political atmosphere before he takes over from General Krishna Rao, who retires next year.

UNWANTED OFFSPRING

HINDUSTAN Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is having some major problems finding buyers for its Marut aircraft. The Marut, thanks to innumerable delays, has been rejected by the Indian Air Force since it is now considered to be of obsolete technology and doesn't fit in with the IAF's scheme of things. HAL has been trying to interest the Navy in the Maruts, but despite reported pressure from political circles, the Navy has turned HAL down flat—which leaves HAL once again holding an unwanted baby along with the Chetak helicopter which is also looking vainly for buyers, despite some heavy advertising.

UNUSUAL ALLIANCES

POLITICS has never had stranger bedfellows than in Haryana. The recent post-election developments were distinguished by a realignment of forces. Bhajan Lal, who had been attempting to sabotage Bansi Lal's chances in Haryana politics by collaborating

Birendra Singh and Bansi Lal: continuing battle

with Union Agriculture Minister Rao Birendra Singh, has switched sides. The first move in the *rapprochement* with Bansi came when his son Surinder Singh was given the agricu portfolio. Now, reliable sources say that Bansi Lal will get Biren Singh's place in the Union Cabinet, and Singh will be jettisoned Mrs Gandhi returns from her US trip. These moves also repres victory for Birendra Singh's arch Ahir enemy, Rao Ram Singh, is slated to get the plum home portfolio in Haryana. Action on fronts was reportedly withheld only because Mrs Gandhi did want any upsets in the Presidential election.

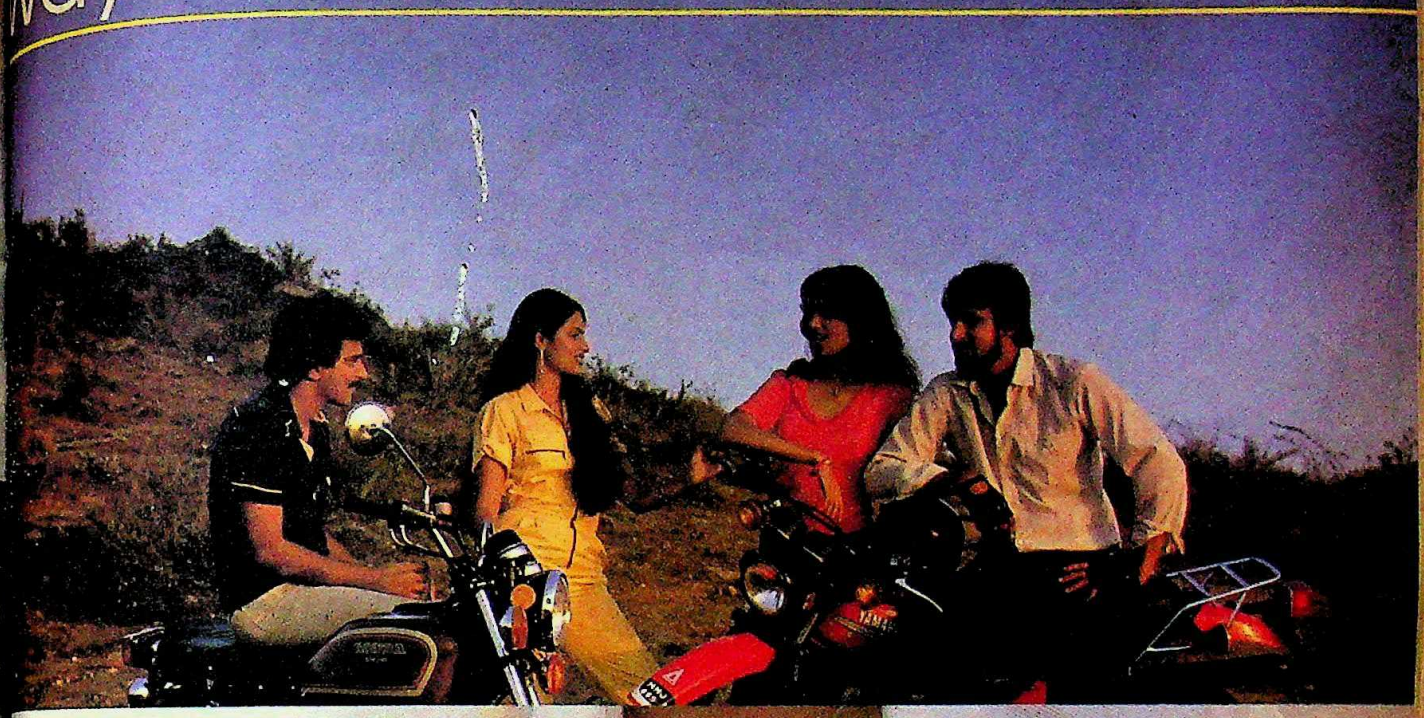
FLOGGING A MEMORY

EVEN two years after his death, Congress(I) leaders are collecting funds in Sanjay Gandhi's name. Despite Mrs Gand disapproval, a prominent Delhi Pradesh Congress(I) Comm (DPCC-I) leader raised over Rs 16 lakh last month from wholes traders of Khari Baoli, Chandni Chowk, Kamala Market and Sa Bazar for celebrating Sanjay's second death anniversary on June Mrs Gandhi attended several DPCC(I)-sponsored functi Recently, two Delhi Congress(I) MP's complained to Mrs Gan that the method by which the donations were procured had brou bad name to the party, because Sanjay's name was exploited to the trading community. Moreover, the list of donors inclu notorious land-grabber against whom both the DDA and Municipal Corporation have launched criminal cases. These have requested Mrs Gandhi to put an end to such practices may spoil the party's prospects in the coming elections to Metropolitan Council.

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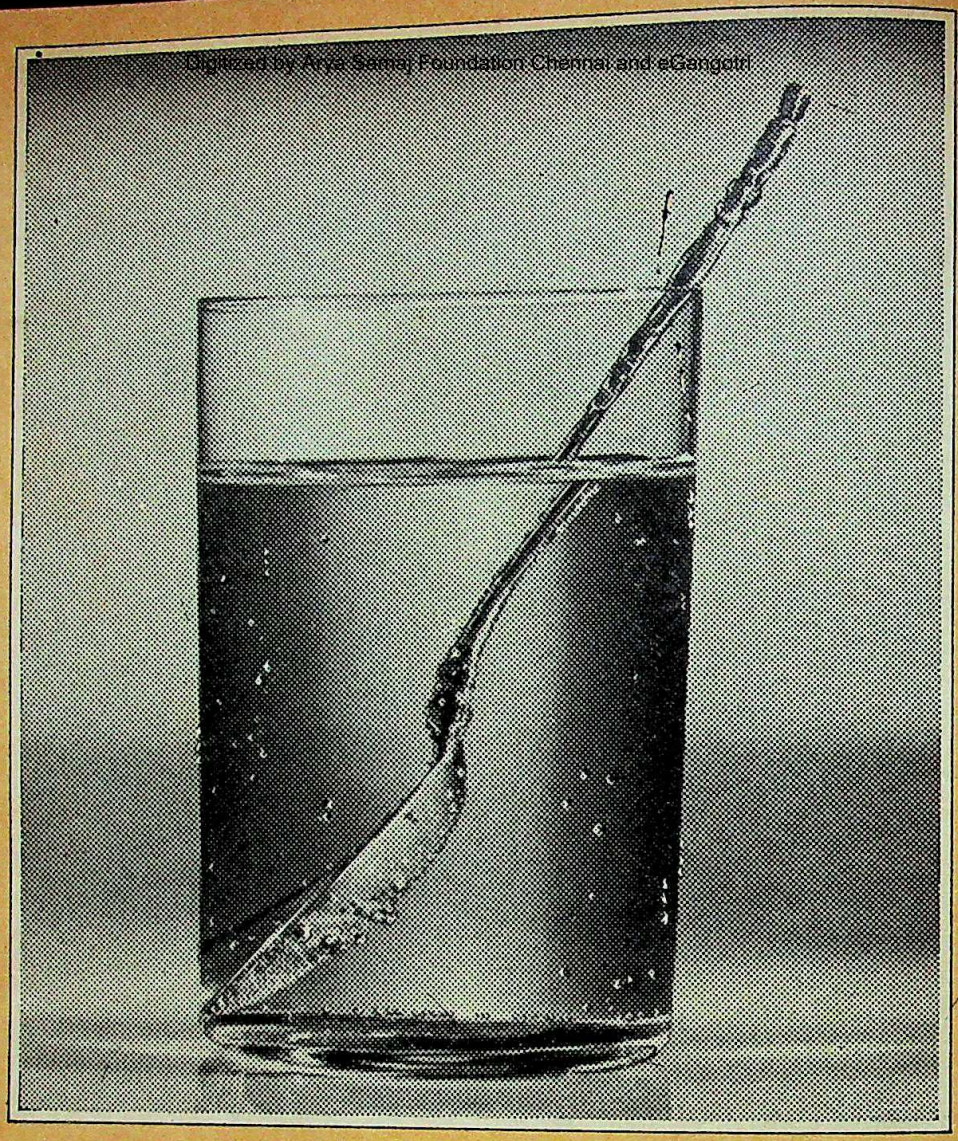
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You do know that the spoon in the water is not really bent. It's just an illusion.

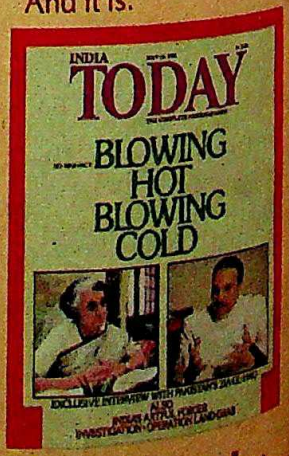
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And it is.



INDIA TODAY THE COMPLETE NEWSMAGAZINE

Because others tell you what. And you want to know why.

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• My mother-in-law (Mrs Indira Gandhi) should realise one thing: it is neither necessary nor ethical to try to destroy people who cannot be bought or bullied. It may work with politicians but not with me.

—*Mrs Maneka Gandhi in* Onlooker

• The Indian press finds an odd hero or two every few years. But if it has come close to grudgingly admitting that it has a darling, it is in Rajiv Gandhi.

—*Salman Khurshid in* Delhi Recorder

• What do we tell our children? That you should not indulge in falsehood but you can do so if you happen to be a major political leader?... That both the offer and acceptance of bribes are heinous offences, but not if our leaders indulge in the exercise...

—*Ashok Mitra in the* Sunday Review

• As military dictators go, he (General Zia-ul-Haq) did not give the impression of being a long-distance runner. He looked more like a cardboard cut-out general and indeed a figure of fun.

—*Inder Malhotra in* The Times Of India

• The BJP has been making tall claims it is the sole national alternative to the ruling party... I do not know how the press gets carried away by Atal Behari Vajpayee and (L.K.) Advani. I think the press was taken for a ride by them and it has made a fool of itself by exposing its gullibility.

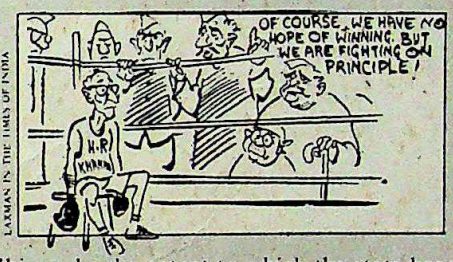
—*Madhu Limaye in* Current

• Those who act against their conscience or sell it at a price cannot escape the charge of cowardice and hypocricy. Such people hardly deserve public confidence in the office they hold...

—*Editorial comment in* The Tribune

• Does Mrs Gandhi feel that the historical role of 'conscience' was over after Mr (V.V.) Giri's election, and the conscience of Congress(I) legislators has now been nationalised?

—*Madhu Dandavate in a press statement in New Delhi*



• The physical presence of Indira Gandhi masks the extent to which the state has weakened. Her physical presence sustains the illusion that there is a government where there isn't one.

—*Arun Shourie in* Probe

• The office of the President should be kept above politics. Though opposition parties have said a lot about me, I bear no ill feeling towards them.

—*Giani Zail Singh to the press in Calcutta*

• The whole intellectual middle class of India was a product of British rule... you turned us into revolutionaries! In a way you made us aware of ourselves.

—*Satyajit Ray quoted by film critic Derek Malcolm in* The Guardian, *London*

• My films run because my characters are real and identifiable. The main characters of my films as well as Ray's films are poor. Ray's characters are miserable while mine are easy-going, happy-go-lucky, who dream big dreams and take life as it comes.

—*Manmohan Desai in* Super

• Behind the extraordinary and almost incredible predilection for sex of our Censors lies a perfectly ordinary explanation—screen lovers may make love, but it is the Censor Board that gets the orgasm.

—*B.K. Karanjia in* Screen

• I don't think our freedom was won fighting in our bathrooms. If we are to get something, we have to fight it out on the streets.

—*Bal Thackeray in* Bombay

• The Congress(I) has brought politics to the level of the street, with ministers turned into constitutional procurers and governors serving as gentlemen of easy virtue.

—*Piloo Mody in* The Illustrated Weekly of India

• I think Shashi Kapoor is too nice for my liking.

—*Naseeruddin Shah in* Star dust

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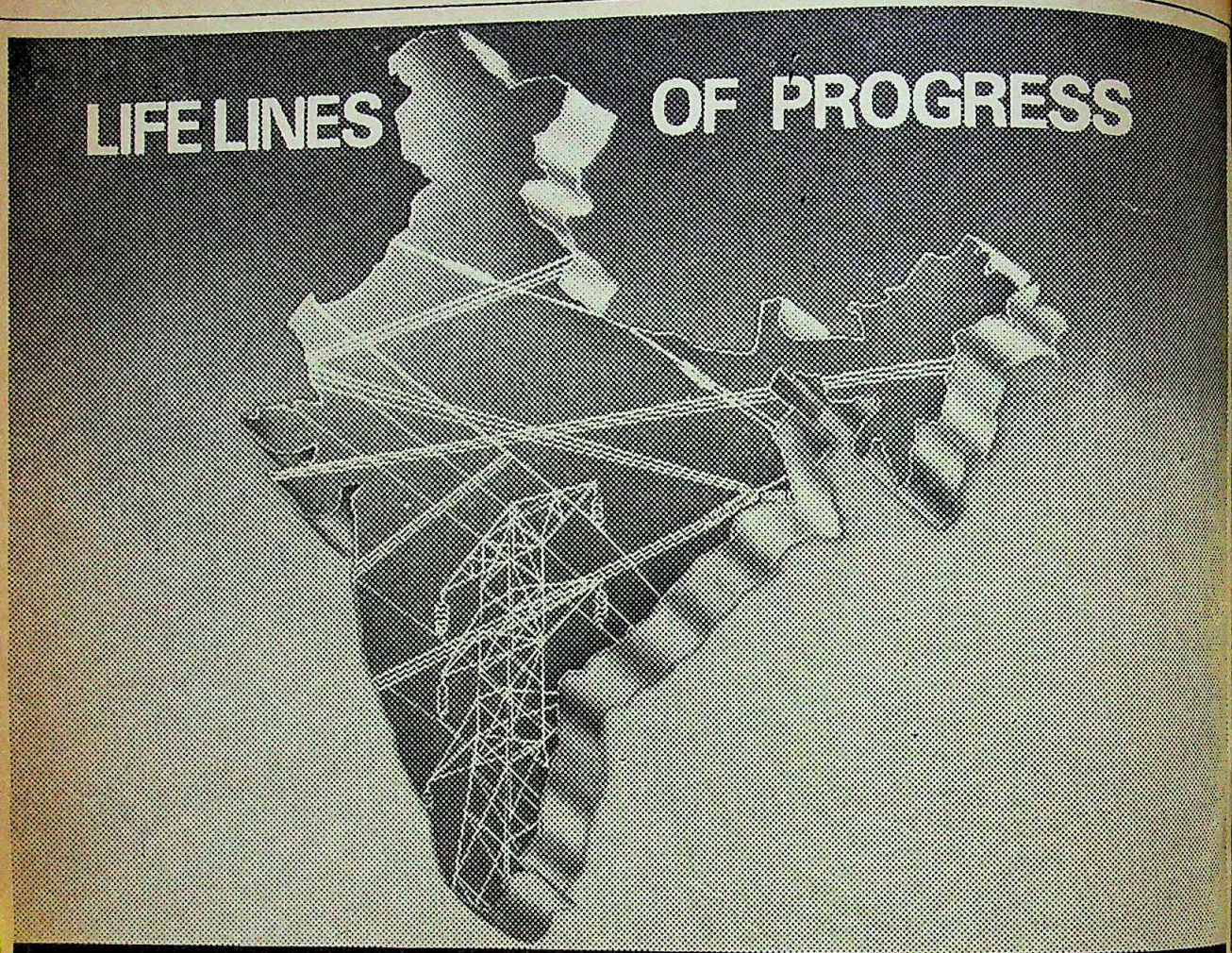
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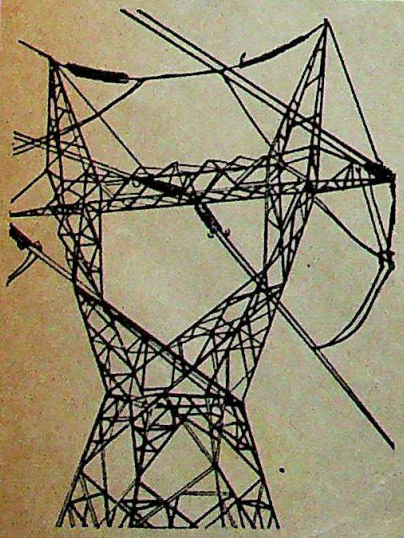
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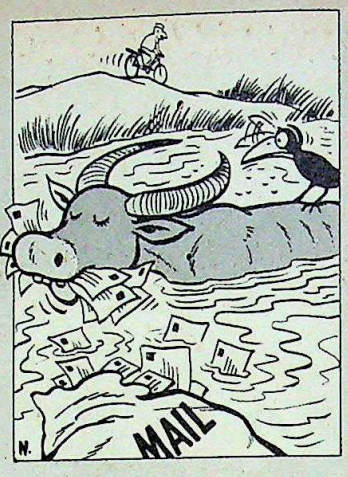
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POST MORTEM

■ At first sight, the large, phlegmatic buffalo wallowing in the pond in Badheri village in the Union territory of Chandigarh seemed quite ordinary, right down to the slowly moving jaws chewing up a chunk of what looked like spaghetti. But Dr D.D. Sharma, passing by, knew that that rather rich and fattening Italian dish is not usually on the menu of large buffaloes in murky Indian ponds.

Rolling up his trousers, and stepping gingerly to the edge of the animal's cool retreat, Sharma noticed that the surface of the pond was alive with more of the spaghetti. He dipped his hand into the water, grabbed at the white mess—and, to his considerable astonishment, discovered that he was holding some very, very bedraggled letters in his hand.

Subsequent investigations indicated that a wandering postman had dumped



the entire content of his bag into the pond, possibly out of pity for the buffalo. The lump of soggy celluloid, when sifted carefully, turned out also to be composed of the marksheets of the matriculation examination of the Punjab School Education Board. An indignant Sharma carried everything to the office of a news agency. Meanwhile, the poor buffalo, rudely interrupted in the middle of a well-earned meal, is waiting for the next postman to come calling.

LAW OF LOVE

■ The police have been called upon to do many things in the service of the nation and its rather ungrateful people, but it is a rare occasion when the guardians of law and order—that is what they are supposed to be, anyway—are asked to arbitrate in a matter of 'luv'. That, however, is just what happened in Ramakuppam village of Bangarpet taluk in Karnataka.

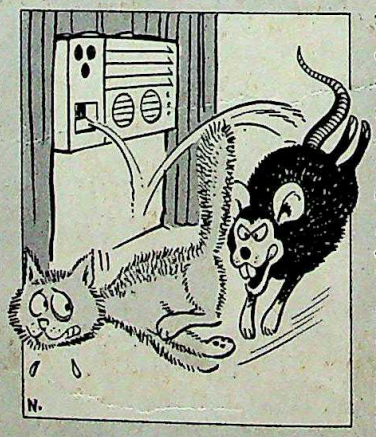


A boy and a girl, belonging to the same community, had been lovers for a long, long time. Unfortunately, their parents, as parents will, did not smile benevolently on the coming match because, oh! filthy lucre, the girl's family did not have enough money to pay the requisite dowry. So the lovers pined away, and the boy's family were looking for another girl for the apple of their eye when the girl's family had a bright idea.

Taking their courage in their hands, they went to the police station—quite a brave thing to do, considering that the police, nowadays, rank only slightly below the *rakshasas* in Indian mythology. The police officer on duty was quite a nice fellow and on hearing of the problem asked the boy's parents to come and see him. He persuaded them to let the apple of their eye marry the girl in his life and even called the local sub-registrar to the police station so that the marriage could be, as they say, solemnised on the spot.

MICE MUZAK

■ There is an old song popularised by Burl Ives which describes an old lady who swallowed a fly and then swallowed progressively bigger rodents and animals to get rid of the previous inhabitants of her stomach. But one person who obviously had not heard the song and its moral, happened to be the general manager of a five-star hotel in New Delhi. On being informed that the hotel's air-conditioning ducts were inhabited by a family of rats who were disturbing the guests, the GM decided that rat traps baited with roquefert or poisoned pate were archaic solutions. No doubt relying on personal experience, he fell back on the sure-fire rat killer—a large and aggressive tom cat which was let loose in the duct. Unfortunately, the best laid plans of mice and men go awry.



The GM had miscalculated on one vital point—five-star rats, considering the diet they have access to, are inclined to be rather large and aggressive themselves. The result was an explosion of skin and fur in guest rooms followed by a deathly silence and, two days later, an awful odour that permeated every room. There is at least one five-star hotel in the capital now that has produced an innovate variation on the term piped music.

GOING APE

■ There is no business like monkey business, as officials in the Madras zoo will willingly attest to. For some time now, a band of wild monkeys have been wreaking simian havoc in the General Hospital near the zoo, harassing patients, interrupting operations, smashing windowpanes and brazenly stealing food from immobile patients. In desperation, hospital authorities approached the zoo officials who hit upon what seemed like the perfect solution. Lakshmi, a trained monkey was released from her cage to lure the monkeys into her cage in the zoo. By nightfall, she had succeeded in her mission and all the wild monkeys had been captured except one muscular male. Zoo officials felt it would only be a question of time before he too succumbed to Lakshmi's charms so they left her in the cage with the door ajar. Next morning, they discovered to their horror that the cage was empty and both Lakshmi and her intended victim had eloped together.



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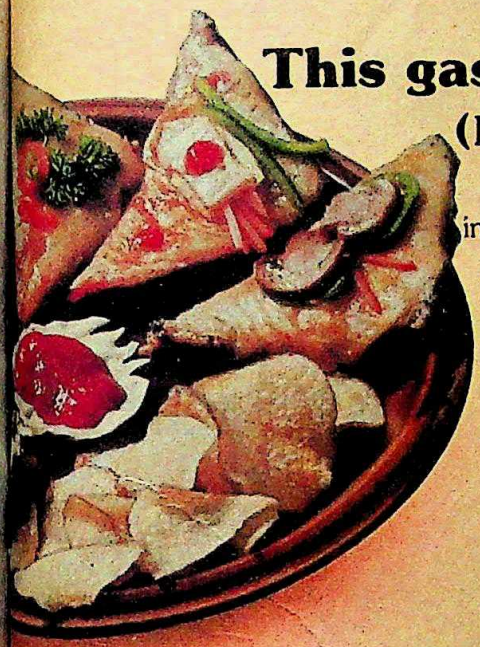
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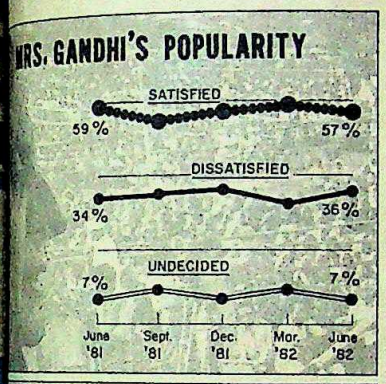
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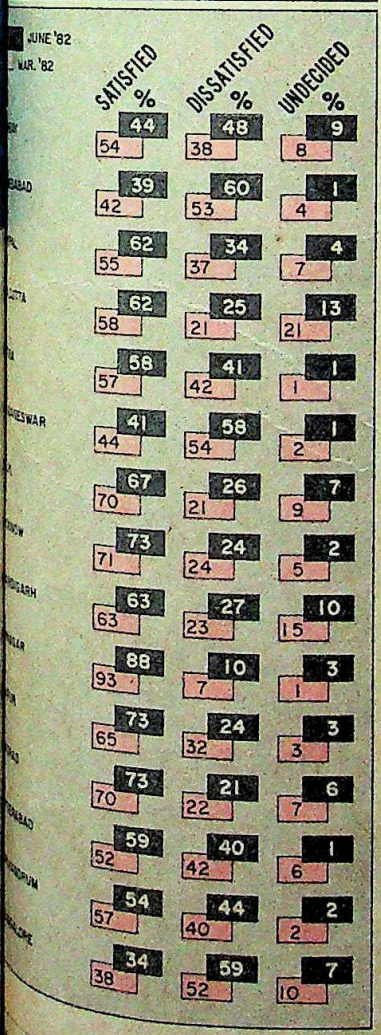
ANDIA TODAY BAROMETER

n Unending Paradox

N SEPTEMBER 1980, INDIA TODAY *published the findings of the first of a series of arterly opinion polls conducted by Indian Market Research Bureau (*IMRB*) in Delhi d 15 state capitals. The main purpose of the* IMRB-INDIA TODAY *Barometer regularly monitor public opinion in 16 key cities of India. While these cities do not esent Indian public opinion as a whole, they do provide an indication of the mood (and anges in it) of the more volatile and informed sections of the voting public.*

The IMRB-INDIA TODAY *Barometer is now in its second year. In this issue, we present the ts of the poll conducted towards the end of June 1982. During this poll, a total of 6,512 ons were interviewed in 15 cities. (Due to unsettled conditions, Gauhati, once again, could t be covered.)*





MRS GANDHI'S STANDING

THE IMRB-INDIA TODAY Barometer shows some deterioration in the popularity (those satisfied with her minus those dissatisfied) of Mrs Gandhi between March and June 1982.

In the West, her popularity has taken a turn for the worse in Bombay and Ahmedabad since the March check, though she has become more popular in Bhopal. In Bombay and Ahmedabad, her opponents outnumber her supporters.

In her traditional strongholds of the North, Mrs Gandhi's undisputed sway continues with her supporters clearly outnumbering her detractors. Yet, compared with the March check, her popularity has declined in Delhi and Srinagar. In Jaipur, she is doing better than in March.

In the East, in Calcutta and Patna, there is little change since March where the balance of popularity continues to be in her favour. In Congress(I)-ruled Bhubaneswar, where her detractors outnumbered her supporters in the March check, her popularity has plummeted further.

In the South, 'Indiramma's' supporters outnumber her opponents in Madras, Hyderabad and Trivandrum. Since the March check, her popularity has increased in Hyderabad but has dropped in Trivandrum. In Gundu Rao's Bangalore, her opponents outnumber her supporters for the sixth successive quarter and, compared with the March check, her popularity has declined further.

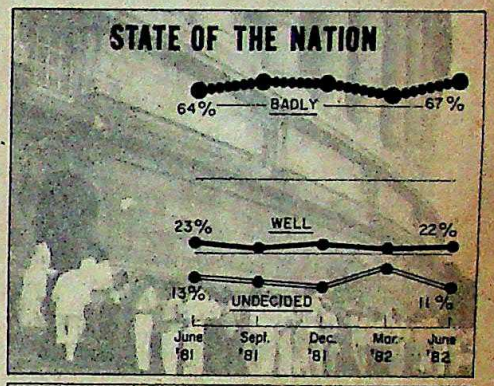
STATE OF THE NATION

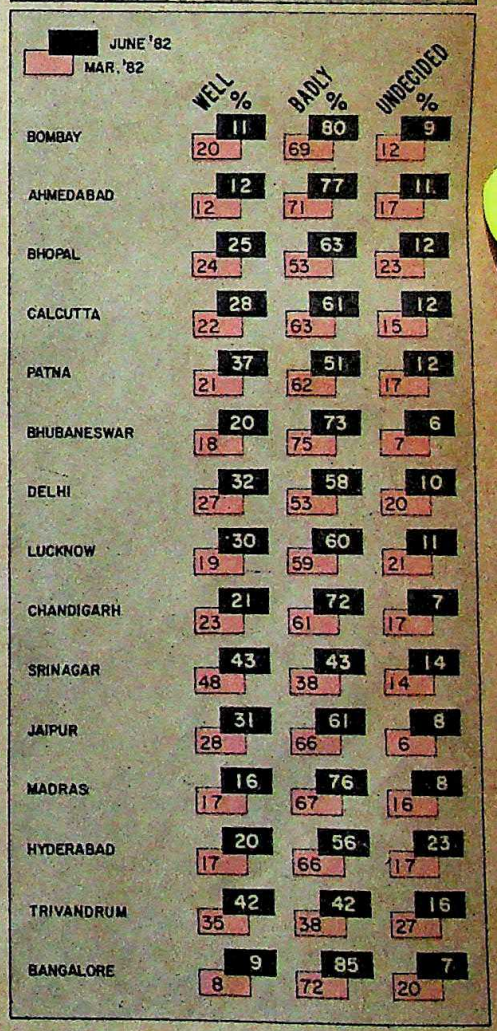
IN A CONTINUING paradox, while the prime minister continues to be popular, so does the view among nearly two-thirds of the electorate that things are going badly.

While the overall trend has remained unchanged, the balance of opinion has fluctuated in a number of cities since March. In the three western capitals, and in Chandigarh, Srinagar, Madras and Bangalore, the balance of opinion has become less favourable. In the three eastern capitals, in Lucknow and Jaipur, the position has improved.

In Bombay, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Madras and Bangalore, the percentage of the electorate stating that things are going badly is at least 50 per cent higher than the percentage stating that things are going well.

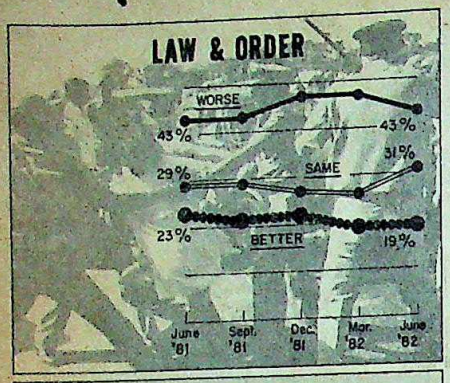
Dissatisfaction was highest in the big industrial cities. Bangalore topped with 85 per cent of the people thinking that things were going badly. It was followed by Bombay's 80 per cent, Ahmedabad's 77 per cent and Madras' 76 per cent. In contrast only 61 expressed dissatisfaction in Calcutta.

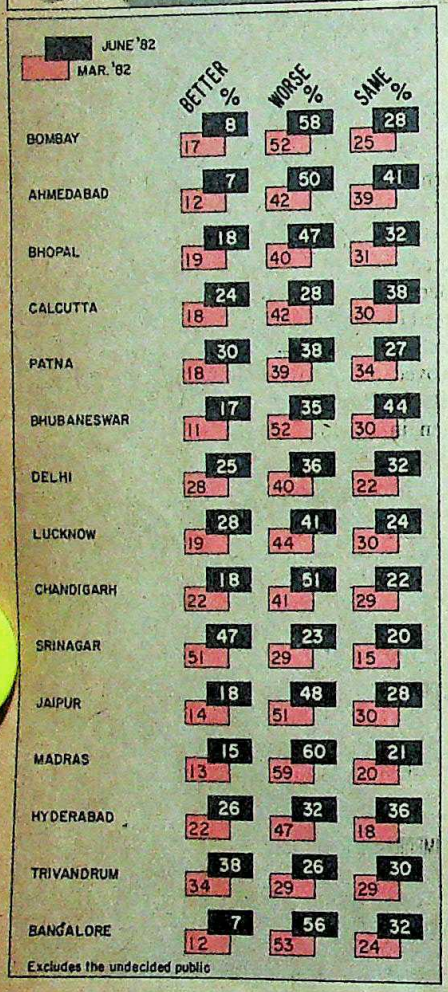


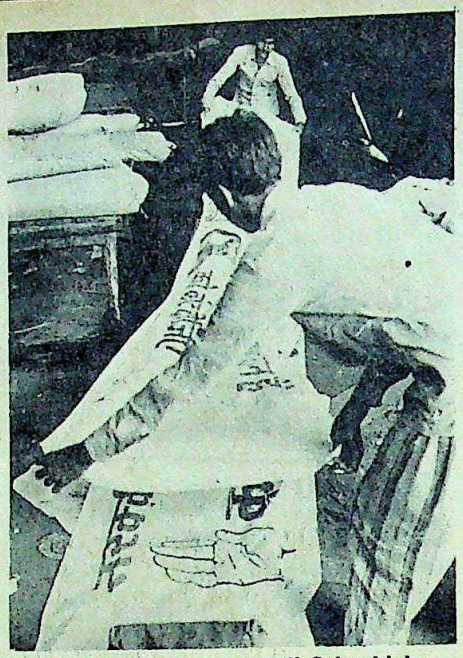


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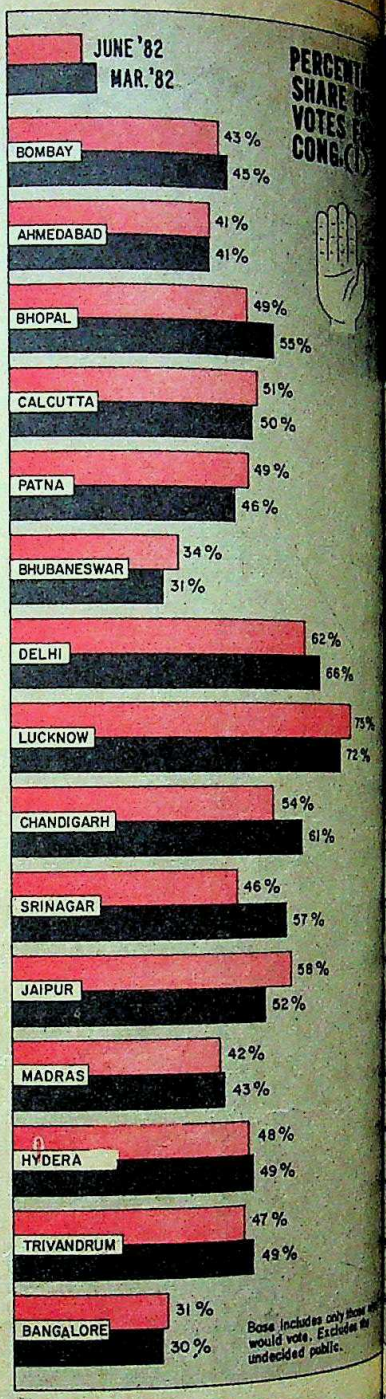
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Congress(I) banners: still flying high



LAW AND ORDER

OVER the past four quarters, there have only been marginal changes in the opinions of voters in the 15 cities taken together on the law and order situation. Those who feel that the law and order situation has worsened over the past three months continue to be twice as numerous as those who feel that the situation has improved.

Compared with the March poll, the balance of opinion has become less favourable in the three western capitals, as well as in Chandigarh and in Bangalore. In the three eastern capitals, and in Lucknow, Jaipur, Hyderabad and Trivandrum, the balance of opinion has become more favourable.

Srinagar and Trivandrum continue to be the only two state capitals where those who think the law and order situation has improved outnumber those who think it has deteriorated over the past three months.

ELECTORAL POPULARITY

THE MAJOR findings of the March poll was that the BJP would provide the strongest opposition to the Congress(I) "if an election to the Lok Sabha was to be held tomorrow". This finding has been corroborated in the June poll. In 10 out of the 15 capital cities, it is the BJP that occupies second position. In Bangalore, the BJP has clearly overhauled Gundu Rao's Congress(I) and occupies the top slot.

In only one city (viz Jaipur) has the popularity of the Congress(I) increased by 5 per cent or more since the March poll. On the other hand, its share has taken a beating of 5 per cent or more in Bhopal, Chandigarh and Srinagar.

In the three western capitals, the Congress(I) clearly leads. In Bombay and Ahmedabad, BJP is second, followed closely by Janata (JP). In Bhopal, it is clearly a two-horse race between the Congress(I) and the BJP.

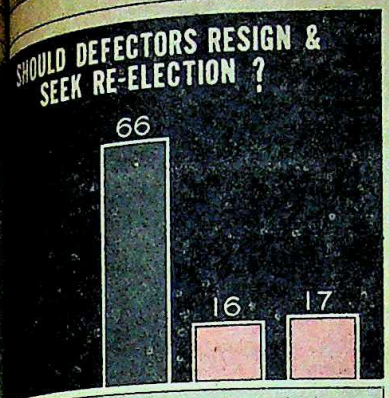
In the March poll, the Congress(I) led in all the northern capitals. In the June poll, it has been overtaken by the National Conference in Srinagar, after having led ever since the first poll in August 1980. In all the other capitals, the Congress(I) still leads, with the BJP in the second position.

In the East, Congress(I) leads in all three cities. In Calcutta, it is followed by the CPI-M, while in the other two cities, it is the BJP that provides the main opposition.

In the South, the Congress(I) is supported by 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the electorate in Hyderabad, Madras and Trivandrum. In Madras, the AIADMK and the DMK continue to vie for second place (with the DMK having an edge). In Trivandrum, it is the CPI-M that is second, while the BJP is second in Hyderabad. In Bangalore, the Congress(I) was leading in the December poll. By March, the BJP had established a slender lead (of 4 per cent), which has since been widened to 10 per cent. No wonder there are rumours that Gundu Rao's position might not be very secure.

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	AGREE %	DISAGREE %	UNDECIDED %
	80	13	7
	70	23	7
	81	10	9
	55	30	15
	59	9	32
	70	8	22
	78	9	13
	57	13	30
	78	9	13
	65	17	18
	81	14	5
	55	8	37
	39	39	28
	57	6	37
	71	16	14

SHOULD DEFECTORS BE PENALISED?

JUST before retiring chief election commissioner, S.L. Shakdher suggested that defectors should resign and seek re-election. To nobody's surprise—and certainly to Bhajan Lal's—there was overwhelming support for this view. Taking all 15 cities, 66 per cent backed this, 17 per cent opposed and 17 per cent offered no comment.

In all cities except Hyderabad and Calcutta, the percentage of the electors who favoured defectors to resign exceeded the proportion who did not think defectors should resign, by more than 40 per cent.



BHAJAN LAL'S ANTICS

	% AVERAGE
APPROVE	16
DISAPPROVE	58
UNDECIDED	26

	BOMBAY	AHMEDABAD	BHOPAL	CALCUTTA	PATNA	BHUBANESWAR	DELHI	LUCKNOW	CHANDIGARH	SRINAGAR	JAIPUR	MADRAS	HYDERABAD	TRIVANDRUM	BANGALORE
APPROVE	17	23	28	12	22	6	16	15	18	28	14	12	26	14	14
DISAPPROVE	73	67	52	62	37	68	56	44	61	33	68	41	51	57	61
UNDECIDED	10	10	20	26	41	26	28	41	21	39	18	47	23	30	25

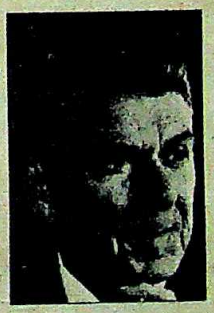
THE ANTICS OF BHAJAN LAL

ALL ELECTORS interviewed were asked: "As you may be aware, Mr Bhajan Lal was able to form a Congress(I) government in Haryana only by including members who had fought against and defeated Congress(I) candidates at the election."

"Do you approve or disapprove of such an action in forming a government based on the support of people who were not elected on the Congress(I) ticket?"

Taking all cities together, while only 16 per cent applauded Bhajan Lal's action, as many as 58 per cent expressed their disapproval of the 'Aya Rams'. The remaining 26 per cent withheld comment.

In every single city, those who disapproved of Bhajan Lal's action were more numerous than those who approved of it. In Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Chandigarh (yes—even in Bhajan Lal's own Chandigarh!), Jaipur, Trivandrum and Bangalore, the percentage of the electorate that disapproved exceeded the percentage of the electorate that backed him by 40 per cent or more.





VISITS		FRIENDSHIP
26 %	US MORE IMPORTANT	11 %
31 %	USSR MORE IMPORTANT	58 %
20 %	BOTH EQUALLY IMPORTANT	11 %
23 %	UNDECIDED	20 %

MRS GANDHI'S VISIT TO THE USA AND THE USSR

ELECTORS were informed about Mrs Gandhi's forthcoming visits to Washington and Moscow and asked to specify the visit they considered more important.

Taking all 15 cities together, the findings suggest that the USSR visit is considered somewhat more important than the USA visit.

In Bombay and Bhubaneswar, more electors considered the USA trip (rather than the USSR trip) more important. In Lucknow, Hyderabad and Bangalore, opinions were fairly evenly divided. In the 10 other capitals, the balance of opinion suggests that it is the USSR trip that is more important.

INDIA'S BEST FRIEND

ELECTORS were asked whether the USA or the USSR is a greater friend of India. The findings show that the Soviet Union is seen as a greater friend by a clear majority of the electorate. The preference for the USSR over the USA was apparent in each of the 15 capitals.

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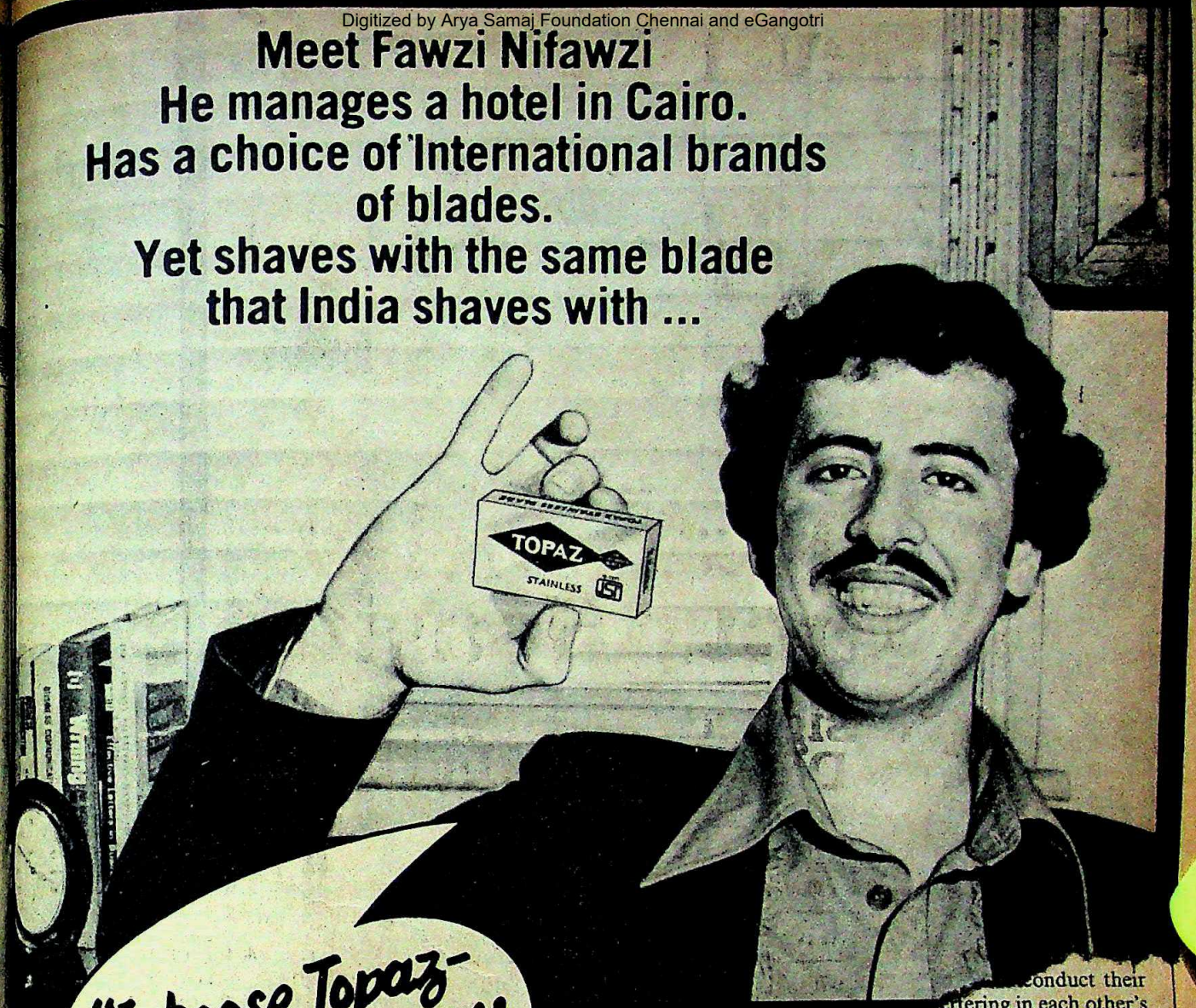
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Meet Fawzi Nifawzi
He manages a hotel in Cairo.
Has a choice of International brands of blades.
Yet shaves with the same blade that India shaves with ...



"I choose Topaz— it's a world-class

...conduct their ...fering in each other's ...could do in the non-aligned ... dialogue. When one nation is ...and stronger than the other it's incumbent upon the large nation to take some initiative. I can say that in Indo-US relations, the initiatives ought to come from the Americans.

In Indo-Pakistan relations, the initiative ought to come from India. We could help ourselves in areas of principles and high diplomacy if the Indians would play a quiet but sustained role in dealing with the Soviet Union on issues like Afghanistan, Poland, Kampuchea and so on. One would like to see the Indians keep up pressure on the Russians so that they restrain the Soviets' hostile activity around the globe.

Q. ***Sitting in Delhi, one gets the impression that India doesn't count much in America's scheme of things.***

A. I'm not going to easily dismiss that view. I don't think there's anything discriminatory in it. Look at any survey done in the United States and you'll find that in terms of importance to them, India ranks somewhere in the bottom quarter. I don't know how to say that and make an Indian feel better! There's some historical reason why that's the case. I think there are positive-negative perceptions from both sides.

If you look backward in time you might be a little disappointed. But look in the future and who's going to back away from the idea that India is a nation which is going to have as much economic development and infrastructure as any nation in the world? You'll gain such strength that you will be a power to reckon with.

The wiser types in the US recognise this. It isn't going to happen in this decade, may not be even in the next one, but certainly thereafter. I haven't met an Indian who isn't sophisticated, well-trained, knowledgeable and beaming with ideas.

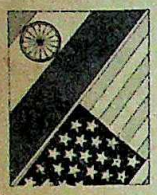
... Friendship ... recent border negotiations China, India did not consult in advance the Soviet Union. "While it is not clear consultations are required by the ty, the failure to consult in this case was dered by many Indian observers as a icant sign of the limits of Indo-Soviet peration," the report said. "While nts express appreciation for the Soviet 's reliability—particularly as an arms plier—Indian nationalism and Mrs dhi's mistrust of foreign powers place limits on the extent of Soviet influence. According to several astute observers, Gandhi's disenchantment with the ets has as much to do with domestic as strategic concerns. She has been ously hurt by the vicious political ks being made on her by the Moscow-rolled Communist Party of India. ording to these sources, Mrs Gandhi

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INDO-US RELATIONS

A Quiet Optimism



PROMISING to produce neither bangs nor whimpers Mrs Gandhi's visit to Washington will probably end on a note of polite cheering. Analysts on both sides warn that people who are working themselves up for the Gandhi tour and harbouring great expectations will probably be faced with a rude anticlimax after the hoopla dies down.

"It's not that her coming here is unimportant," one US official confided. "Given the strains in our relations that have heightened over the last year, Mrs Gandhi's visit is in itself an important event. In fact, the visit is the message." Notwithstanding all the pre-visit hype now adorning the pages of Indian newspapers regularly, Mrs Gandhi's talks here are not expected to result in any dramatic breakthrough—not on the issue of nuclear fuel or spare parts for Tarapur, not on the differences on military sales to Pakistan, not on the basic Reaganite posture in South Asia.

There is no specific activity to be accomplished, no special agenda to be discussed such as an agreement on bases or military policy. And there is no urgency associated with Gandhi's visit as was the case with Anwar Sadat coming here to Camp [illegible] flying in to defend his [illegible] Presidency.

Vital Recognition: "The exercise is not intended to have the two leaders sit around the table and resolve the Tarapur issue which is highly complex and legislative in nature," said a US administration source. "The invitation to Mrs Gandhi does not reflect any administration rethinking on its relationships with Pakistan. Nor does President Reagan expect Mrs Gandhi to issue a public denunciation of Soviet policy in Afghanistan. Nonetheless it is a strong message to India from the US that India is important to US interests and that the Indian point of view cannot be cavalierly written off." It is also an overdue gesture from the Reagan Administration to the Indian Government—a symbolic recognition of India's independence in the pursuit of its foreign policy interests. In the past, Reagan and his advisers had tended to regard India as a marionette manipulated by the marxist mandarins in the Kremlin. India's failure to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the United Nations, its friendship treaty and arms supply relationship with the Soviets, tended to bolster this view.

As Peter Galbraith, staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote in a recent white paper addressed to all Senators on the committee: "United States—Indian relations also seem to be impaired by an Indian perception that the Reagan Administration is particularly hostile to India. As seen from New Delhi, the [illegible] views the world in

time during his administration, a gen[illegible] effort to cater to Indian political sensibi[illegible] as well as a shift away from what [illegible] appeared to be a die-hard policy of regard[illegible] India as a hopeless, Soviet-depen[illegible] basket-case whose public mouthings of n[illegible] alignment were to be considered no [illegible] than a pitiful masquerade. An intang[illegible] gain, perhaps. But significant for [illegible] bilateral good health of both countries.

Indeed Mrs Gandhi could not h[illegible] chosen a more politically propitious time [illegible] arrive in Washington. On virtually e[illegible] front—domestic and international—[illegible] Reagan Administration has begun to hin[illegible] a new flexibility. It has responded cautio[illegible] but positively to the Soviet Union's propo[illegible] for new disarmament talks. Its respons[illegible] the domestic and European peace and [illegible] nuclear movements has been well-mou[illegible] and relatively free of stridency. It has be[illegible] tracked from its initial ideologi[illegible] opposition to the extension of the Vo[illegible] Rights Act—a key piece of civil ri[illegible] legislation that ensures full participation [illegible] black Americans in the electoral proces[illegible]

New Receptivity: "The US Admi[illegible] tration is in a receptive period," one seni[illegible] Indian analyst remarked. "There's [illegible] question about it. In the Congress and wi[illegible] the Administration there's a positive inter[illegible] in Mrs Gandhi's visit." Alexander H[illegible] resignation is not expected to have any [illegible] on the Gandhi visit. True, Haig [illegible] recommended inviting the Indian leader [illegible] Haig's desire was to place India within [illegible] [illegible] of his own strategic concep[illegible] [illegible] tary-designate George Sch[illegible]

and open[illegible] about? The steel and glass. [illegible] joint planning—meticulous. There's nothing missing. There will be schools and hospitals, places of worship and sylvan parks. Because DLF Qutab Enclave is a perfectly-planned and unerringly-executed minipolis, self-contained and refreshing. Just 12 kilometres from Delhi International Airport & Qutab Minar, across the Delhi-Haryana border, on the new Gurgaon-Faridabad Highway.

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of trade and economic cooperation as
ments of foreign policy.
The American willingness to deal with
as an independent nation pursuing its
security interests rather than ignoring it
being slavishly addicted to the Soviet
's international positions is also based
ome clear signals from Mrs Gandhi.
withstanding her public posture, Mrs
dhi has left little doubt about her deep
ral distaste for Soviet actions in
nistan. Her immediate acceptance of
's invitation and the postponement
earlier scheduled pre-Washington visit
oscow are clear signals to the White
e and the Kremlin of her dissatisfaction
the Soviets.
The Senate Foreign Relations Commi-
staff report points out that the Indo-
relationship, in its present form, may
outlived its usefulness. "Among the
public, and within the Indian
rnment, there are significant signs of
ntent with the current Indo-Soviet
nship. With the exception of
munist Party politicians, the Soviets
sharply criticised in meetings for their
pation of Afghanistan. Several Indian
icians and journalists expressed concern
potential threat to India posed by
t forces in Afghanistan, the first time a
power has had troops south of the
u Kush. There is also considerable
—and even embarrassment—in New
over the Government's failure to speak
orcefully on Afghanistan."

THE INDIAN Government's dis
content with its relationship with
the Soviets, according to the report,
monstrated when India turned down a
request for a high level delegation to
Moscow to celebrate the 10th
ersary of the Indo-Soviet Friendship
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RICHARD BEAL

'It's Not A Magic Show'

Last month, Richard Beal, special assistant to President Reagan, flew into New Delhi to tie up loose ends and do some necessary spadework for Mrs Gandhi's visit. While in Delhi, Beal was interviewed by Senior Editor S. VENKAT NARAYAN. *Excerpts:*

Q. ***What are your impressions of Mrs Gandhi? What's she expecting out of her forthcoming visit to Washington?***

A. She's been around a long time. She's a very careful, thoughtful, realistic kind of person. She knows this kind of meeting sometimes creates expectations it ought not to, and sometimes it can end up in such a way that one wonders why one bothered at all. I think she's looking forward to it as a heads-of-state exchange, as a general discussion of relations, of a step in a process, and of an opportunity for her to explain to the President of the United States her view of some of the basic elements in Indo-American relations. I don't think she anticipates that this is going to rush right out and solve this problem or that. She is much too sophisticated a world leader to expect quick results. This is not a magic show.



Q. ***The Indian prime minister appears to be irritated with the general feeling in the US that she is a Russian lackey. Do the Americans realise this?***

A. Some Americans do. It's always difficult to know what's on the ledger sheet, what are the pluses and minuses. A reasonable number of decision-makers in the US see more positives than negatives. Some journalists and scholars may not look at it this way. My view is that India's size requires India to do exactly what America's size requires America to do: having wide proliferation of contacts—commercial, trade, economic, financial, military and security assistance—with lots of nations to the degree that is pursued because it's good for India's economy.

One of the things I'd be mentioning to the Administration is the strength of India's private sector. You now have many more industries in the private sector and it is generally very healthy. Our view is that it's a flourishing private sector that's more likely to create the middle classes in any society, redistribute wealth, increase mobility of the people and achieve long-term stability in a society. As long as that happens I can't see how the US could be unhappy with India.

Q. ***How could India evoke a more positive response in Washington?***

A. It would be helpful if the US and India figured out how to conduct their affairs by consulting, perhaps even collaborating but never interfering in each other's affairs. It would help us if we knew how or what India could do in the non-aligned movement, in the Group of 77, in the North-South dialogue. When one nation is much larger and stronger than the other it's incumbent upon the large nation to take some initiative. I can say that in Indo-US relations, the initiatives ought to come from the Americans.

In Indo-Pakistan relations, the initiative ought to come from India. We could help ourselves in areas of principles and high diplomacy if the Indians would play a quiet but sustained role in dealing with the Soviet Union on issues like Afghanistan, Poland, Kampuchea and so on. One would like to see the Indians keep up pressure on the Russians so that they restrain the Soviets' hostile activity around the globe.

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SCHEDULE

Crowded Programme

THE INDIAN Embassy in Washington has politely been turning down hundreds of requests from private organisations and academic institutions across America which want to invite Mrs Indira Gandhi to address them and in turn to shower her with honorary degrees, on her four-day visit to the US this month. Said an Indian diplomat: "They found out on their own that the prime minister is coming here, and they all want to invite her to their organisations. Their response to her visit has been overwhelming."

Mrs Gandhi is going to have her hands full almost from the moment her specially chartered Air-India Boeing 707, carrying her and her party of about 15, touches down at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York on July 27. Her schedule—which is still being honed and altered—would send a lesser person reeling.

After touchdown she and her entourage will head for a suite of rooms in the Carlisle Hotel in downtown Manhattan in a fleet of limousines provided by the State Department. The Carlisle is an old, exclusive and elegant British-style hotel where Jawaharlal Nehru used to stay on his visits to the US. Mrs Gandhi also stayed there during her last visit and requested to be put up at the same hotel this time. She even asked for the same suite of rooms. Unfortunately the suite where she had stayed previously has been purchased for permanent use by a rich American family. Mrs Gandhi will be given an identical suite one floor below. The accompanying press delegation will be housed in a less expensive hotel nearby, possibly the Westbury.



Informal Meetings: While in New York Mrs Gandhi is scheduled to attend several informal meetings, including an exclusive luncheon hosted by the prestigious Museum of Modern Art to be attended by black-tied cultural leaders, and the heads of major museums such as the Whitney and Guggenheim. She will fly to Washington on the evening of July 28 and hold further informal consultations. She will have a few hours during which to shop and rest.

July 29 will be a heavy day. At 10 a.m. sharp she heads for the White House for a three-hour meeting with President Ronald Reagan. Following the meeting, the prime minister and the President will make a traditional appearance together on the White House lawn—a ceremony replete with honour guards and speeches usually seen live on TV across the nation.

While not yet definitely scheduled, the White House meeting will be followed by a private lunch hosted by the secretary of state. Straight after lunch Mrs Gandhi will go to Capitol Hill where she will address members of the senate and house of representatives in private. In the evening President Reagan will host a special White House dinner in her honour.

The next day—July 30—Mrs Gandhi will invite selected journalists and intellectuals in separate groups to her hotel quarters for private discussions. For lunch she will be whisked off to a jam-packed National Press Club where she will hold a lengthy press conference. Then, back to her hotel—or to the embassy—where she will receive top cabinet officers of the Reagan Administration. At 4 p.m. the embassy will host a reception for 400 guests. Two hours later Mrs Gandhi will host a return dinner party for American VIPs at her hotel.

On the morning of July 31, she will meet thousands of members of the Indian community inthe concert hall of the Kennedy Center For The Performing Arts. Then she will fly back to New York, where among other back-to-back functions, she will meet members of New York's Indian community, the Indian Chambers of Commerce, and attend a lunch hosted by the Asian Society, the Far Eastern Foreign Policy Association, and the Foreign Policy Association.

While in New York, she will tape a live interview for the most popular Sunday nation-wide TV programme, *Meet The Press*. Sunday evening she will meet Indian scientists and technicians residing in the US to discuss ways of promoting technology transfers to India. Before returning to India she will spend two days in California, meeting city mayors and members of the west coast Indian community. She will stop off briefly in Honolulu where she will present an Indian baby elephant to the city zoo.

believes that Moscow has insidiously [illegible] trying to undermine her power domes[illegible] by refusing to discipline or rein-in the [illegible] communists over whom the Kremlin wields enormous influence. development, too, is one significant [illegible] behind her forthcoming friendship-see[illegible] trip to Washington.

Another domestic compulsion economic. The liberalisation of the [illegible] economy is seen by many experts as a stage in Indian economic development parallels similar trends in China and within the Soviet bloc. "Follow achievement of self-reliance, it is imper[illegible] that there be revolutions in management increases in efficiency in order to make infrastructure work," remarked an [illegible] official. "So it is natural to turn to Ame[illegible] as other nations have done, to meet t[illegible] needs." But the "turn to America" inspired not only by pragmatism and pressures on Mrs Gandhi for better econo[illegible] performance but also by the forces usher[illegible] in new stages in India's economic deve[illegible] ment—the pro-American nouv[illegible] capitalists in both the Sanjay and R[illegible] Gandhi camps.

Liberalisation: Mrs Gandhi's atte[illegible] to liberalise the economy have not [illegible] unnoticed in Washington. As one US [illegible] department insider said: "Even in the m[illegible] of adverse balance of payments, Ind[illegible] taking risks and we realise that. But [illegible] applaud and encourage India's m[illegible] pragmatic policies for business." No do[illegible] the Indian delegation will lose no ti[illegible] impressing on the Reaganites the ch[illegible] taking place within the Indian econo[illegible] order to try and change the presi[illegible] niggardly attitude towards suppo[illegible] multilateral lending institutions of [illegible] India has so far been the leading benefi[illegible] While the Americans are expected to [illegible] receptive, there are unlikely to be [illegible] immediate promises or concessions exc[illegible] the areas of countervailing tariffs.

A US state department o[illegible] explained that the Reagan Administra[illegible] policies toward multilateral le[illegible] institutions such as the W[illegible] Bank—although perceived by the Indi[illegible] be hurting India—are not deliber[illegible] crafted to target India. "It just happ[illegible] that India had 40 per cent use of the In[illegible] tional Development Association (IDA) f[illegible] and as the Administration, general p[illegible] evolved, India suffered. The policy is b[illegible] on economic and not political ratio[illegible] "Nobody's out to screw India just be[illegible] it's India. The Administration's p[illegible] toward the World Bank are in the b[illegible] They're locked up in the national b[illegible] President Reagan fought hard to ma[illegible] that the US met its commitment to th[illegible]

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the sixth replenishment period. He mitted that commitment." Mrs Gandhi's sible pitch to Reagan to change his proach towards the World Bank is likely ounder on the rocks of the economic logy with which the Reagan Adminis- ion approaches the World Bank. The US inistration's view is that the World k should be a catalyst for the private r, that countries like India—the most anced developing nation in the rld—should use commercial markets for rowing and leave IDA funds for the rest countries.

Congenial Climate: US officials believe India's more pragmatic business policies ultimately make it more attractive to erican business investors. Currently, ia's investment image, as many nessmen here put it, "stinks". But the ate for import of electronics and leum-related American techno- s—which India sorely needs—is likely prove with the Gandhi visit.

"Some of these areas may be gibles," one US diplomat said. "But the ential is limitless. The Gandhi visit is a al corollary to Cancun where the two ers discovered they could talk to each despite strains. Since then the meetings the Indo-US subcommissions have been endously productive. We've made some l progress in commercial areas, cultural research, business collaboration s and cultural events."

During the talks scheduled to take place the Indians are expected to go out of r way to impress on the Americans that ndian regional stance is the best that the can expect in this part of the world. ther that US interests are best guarded by a strong, non-aligned India. failure of the US to give India the rnational importance it deserves is in- reted in India as American hostility. The ate staff report quotes an Indian dip- at as saying: "We cannot accept that you indifferent to us, so therefore we believe are really conspiring against us."

In all probability, according to lomatic sources, the Reagan Adminis- ion will assure Mrs Gandhi that it ognises India as the dominant power of uth Asia and the Indian Ocean region. is a key recommendation of the Senate t report. Says the report: "A US policy at fails to recognise this simple fact of ography and demography is short-sighted d in the long run may compromise vital interests. Recognition of India's portance and in particular some nsitivity to its perception of itself as an dependent world power could do much to prove relations at little cost."

—INDERJIT BADHWAR in Washington

DIPLOMACY

Hasty Exit

COMING when it did, it was by every indication a carefully calculated move by a nation in need of a martyr. After almost three years of playing a particularly low-key role, the Israeli consul in Bombay suddenly spoke to a city newspaper in a stinging indictment of Indian foreign policy. On the repeated occasions when parliamentarians have demanded closure of the consulate in Bombay; after numerous anti-Israeli *morchas* and demonstrations and even after the incident 19 months ago when Israeli citizens were suddenly and without notice refused entry and deported from Bombay airport. On all these occasions the Israeli consul in Bombay, Yosef Hasseen, has maintained a studied silence.

But last fortnight, after an Indian denunciation of the Israeli attack in Lebanon got more strident, the diplomat suddenly found his voice. In a no holds barred interview to Bombay's *Sunday Observer*, Hasseen broke all diplomatic norms by saying that Indian politicians were only anti-Israel because of a fear that Iraq would stop supplying the country oil and Saudi Arabia importing its labour. "You are competing with Pakistan to impress the Arabs," he added.

In a clear attempt to draw parallels between Indian actions and the Israeli aggression, he stated that "Israel did not agree with the way India treated Sikkim," or "took over Goa" but that did not make his country a constant critic of India. Attacking the Indian press for "deliberately and intentionally" trying to divert the native Indian sympathy for Israel, he insisted that the anti-Israel lobby was little more than a communal movement by the pro-Arab Muslims of the country.

Swift Crack-down: The governmental crack-down came swiftly. The decision to expel Hasseen was taken and a telexed message hastily relayed by Maharashtra Chief Secretary P.G. Gavai informing Hasseen that he had been declared *persona non grata* in the country and would have to leave within 48 hours. The reason given: "Unacceptable interference in the domestic affairs of India." "No, we have no intentions of protesting your government's decision," said Hasseen some 30 hours before his departure. "I will leave tomorrow night and my wife and child will follow after closing down our residence here. It was a unilateral decision of your government and we were not asked to comment or offer justifications, so we are not doing so." If



Consul Hasseen: breaking norms

the Government was clearly incensed at the diplomat's undiplomatic utterances, there were Indians who felt he hadn't really been far off the mark. Ram Jethmalani, vice-president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, accused Mrs Gandhi of having "mortgaged our non-alignment policy to the Arabs." In the wake of the expulsion order, the Government announced that it was actively studying the closure of the Israeli mission in Bombay.

Surprisingly, Hasseen's outspoken interview appeared only a fortnight before he was to leave India anyway, on a fresh posting as ambassador to Panama. The invitation cards for a farewell party on July 16 had already been sent out when news of his abrupt expulsion reached the wiry, shirt-sleeved diplomat.

It was particularly odd that Hasseen should have commented so strongly against the Government and Indian politicians considering the tenuous status of the Israeli consulate in Bombay. Set up specifically to act as a conduit for Maharashtra's tiny Jewish population, the consulate already plays a severely limited role because of India's diplomatic and trade embargo against Israel. Virtually existing on the sufferance of the Government which has repeatedly withstood countless demands for its closure the consulate is an anomalous entity quite out of line with Indian policy towards Israel. South Africa, which has a sizeable Indian population but is otherwise in a similar state of diplomatic suspension, enjoys no such privilege. But even in the case of the Bombay consulate the powers are limited. Its jurisdiction extends only to the state of Maharashtra, and if consular officers travel outside Maharashtra they do so as ordinary Israeli citizens.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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UTTAR PRADESH

A Political Casualty



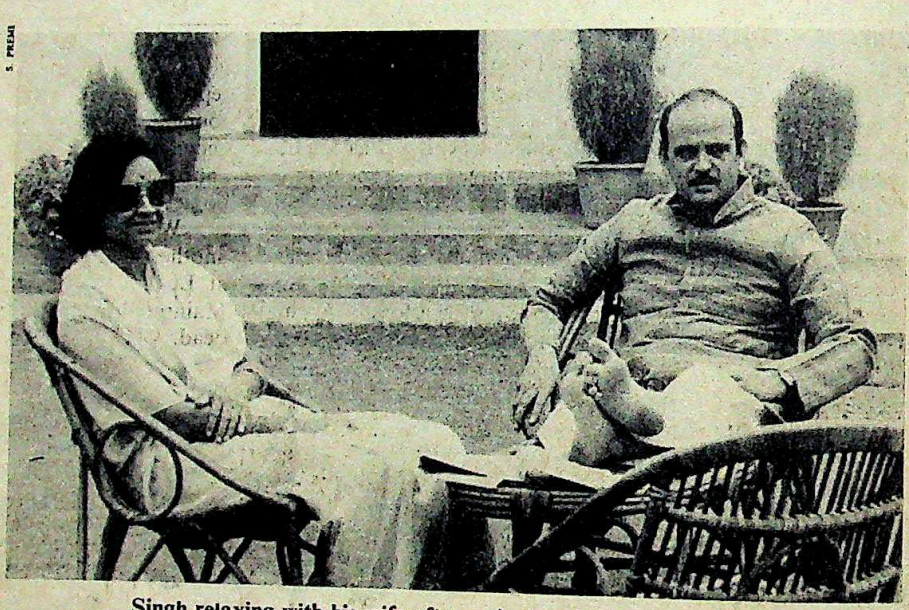
NOTHING could have been more alien to Indian politics. Vishwanath Pratap Singh, 50, for 25 months chief minister of the huge and unwieldy state of Uttar Pradesh, finally threw up his hands in despair in a 500-word letter of resignation to the governor, immediately after 21 people were gunned down by dacoits in Kanpur and Mainpuri districts on June 28. Said Singh after stepping down: "I decided to quit due to the dictates of my conscience. The people of Uttar Pradesh waited for long and did not get the desired results. Why should they pay for my failures?"

Singh's gracious, if rather swift exit set an embarrassing precedent for other chief ministers whose record in office is not much better. It drew applause from the media and from the Opposition, which called it "morally sound"; on the other hand, his own partymen called it "indiscipline"—he had handed in his resignation without consulting the prime minister—and a "political conspiracy to malign the Congress(I)."

Weary Leader: Singh linked his exit to the dacoits and the law and order situation. In fact, he had drafted his resignation twice earlier—the first time when communal violence shook Moradabad and Aligarh in September 1980 and the second time in November 1981 when the Radhey-Santosha gang rounded off a good year by slaughtering 24 people in Mainpuri district. The first time Mrs Gandhi refused to accept his offer to go. The second time, the police came to Singh's rescue by arresting Radhey and Santosha before Singh's own deadline expired, and also killed over 50 dacoits in a month.

The former chief minister projected the dacoits as his enemy number one. In his tenure over 1,500 of the outlaws were killed by the police, who lost 133 of their own men, the largest number killed in any state in encounters with dacoits. But the mayhem did not stop: Phoolan Devi gunned down 21 Thakurs in Kanpur district in February last year, 24 Harijans fell in Dehuli village and Singh's brother, an Allahabad High Court judge, was murdered along with his son in March 1982. This year, 20 policemen allegedly raped Harijan and other backward class women in Siswa village in Basti district and looted 20 of the hovels.

However, dacoits and their doings were only part of the former chief minister's problems. There were others that caused him sleepless nights—his total lack of rapport with his own party MLA's, a party organisation seemingly indifferent to his fortunes, rabid factionalism in the state Congress(I), a bureaucracy which never quite responded to Singh's good-natured handling, and last, but not least, the brakes on his actions put up by meddlesome politicians at the Centre. In that gloomy context, Singh probably accepted the June 28 carnage with perverse relief, opting out of a brutal world he was a misfit in.



S. PREMI

Singh relaxing with his wife after resigning: besieged by factions

Rough Going: The gentlemanly politician was uneasy in his chair right from the moment he was imposed on the 330-member Congress(I) Legislature Party by Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi. Without a base of his own, Singh presided over a cabinet of politicians unknown to him. In fact, of the 49 ministers, the chief minister had a hand in the choice of just six; the others were chosen for him by Central leaders who included Arun Nehru, Shiela Kaul, Narain Dutt Tiwari, Kamlapati Tripathi and C.P.N. Singh. V.P. Singh, with only a two-year as Union deputy minister for commerce experience, had to grin and bear it.

It was rough going. Firstly, Singh cabinet colleagues were apparently only ing to bury factional knives in his b Discloses a senior Indian Administrati Service (IAS) official close to the former minister: "He was never able to win confidence of all the castes because of campaign carried out against him by his cabinet colleagues." Secondly, Singh covered that over 180 MLA's, including his ministers, were involved in crimi cases. They were also allegedly patroni over 1,000 anti-social elements in the st The list includes:

► Balram Sing Yadav, a senior minister, is a Sanjay protege accused of shielding many dacoit gangs belonging to his community;

► Sugarcane Minister Sheonath Singh Kushwaha is a distant relation of dreaded bandit Raghewandan Singh;

► Gulab Singh, till recently a minister, was charged with growing opium illegally at his Dehra Dun farm;

► A nephew of another minister, Shivraj Singh, was allegedly involved in a dacoity case. Shivraj Singh has openly criticised the state Government for fake 'encounters' between dacoits and policemen. He even led a press party from Kanpur to Lucknow and fed it with propaganda against V.P. Singh;

► Swarup Kumari Bakshi, state home minister, was involved in a case filed by a woman claiming to be the wife of Bakshi's husband;

► Minister for Rural Development Bhanu Pratap Singh came under political attack when his son was murdered in the house of a prostitute;

► Minister for Local Self-Government Krishan Kumar Goyal is facing allegations of administrative irregularities and the non-payment of electricity bills for his farms;

► Rajinder Tripathi, till recently minister of state for home affairs, was accused of ordering transfers of police officials on questionable grounds.

Little Choice: The fractious politicians who ruled the state survived in office on the strength of their links with top New Del

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...rs, and made frequent trips to the ...l. And although Singh shuffled his ... nine times, he was not allowed to make ...portant changes. Early this year when he ...cated some portfolios he wanted to ... Balram Singh Yadav, Transport Minis... Veer Bahadur Singh, Cooperative ...ister Vasudev Singh and three others but ...quest was turned down. Home Minister ...di, foisted on the long-suffering Singh ...ite his opposition, never owned up her ...nsibility for the chaotic law and order ...tion.

The Central leaders even meddled in the ...ation of bureaucratic plums. Rajinder ... Khosla, an additional secretary at the Centre, was appointed chief secretary, vaulting over 14 senior officials in the state and at the Centre, despite Singh's support for a senior IAS officer from the state. Earlier, Ram Chandra Takru, a Kashmiri state civil service official who was promoted to the IAS cadre in 1975 and was 326th in the pecking order, was made home secretary, leaping over officials 20 years senior. Central leaders had two officials inducted onto the state electricity board, and four others be made managing directors of multi-crore public sector undertakings. A tantrik, Balti Baba, was made chairman of the state civil supply corporation with the backing of two Central ministers.

Hurdles: As the top bureaucrats owed allegiance to Central stalwarts, Singh's dream of taking the administration from the "file to the field" faded. Plans for the decentralisation of administrative power and the Udyog Bandhu experiment— a one-stop clearing shop for industry's problems—stayed on paper. His officials even stooped to misleading him: last year, for example, he was made to make an untrue statement about the recovery of electricity arrears from various industrial units.

When the police were alleged to have been involved in the Siswa carnage, the district police official sent the chief minister a report refuting the allegations, first made by

DASTAMPUR

Night Of Terror

NO FOOTFALLS were heard in the dusty back streets of Dastampur village. No strange whisperings in the dark. No shadows were seen moving under cover of a summer night.

And then, all too suddenly, it began with the loud report of a single gun followed by a rapid burst of gunfire which shattered the stillness of the night. The firing had taken place on the roof-top of Pyarelal Yadav's house and he himself—a 67-year-old paralytic—was the first to be shot dead. The massacre on June 28 was indisputably a vendetta. Minutes later another 10, including four women and two children, were also gunned down mercilessly at close range. All members of the same family. All Yadavs.

The killers numbering over 30, all outfitted in police uniforms, were led by Muslim, a younger brother of the dreaded dacoit Mustaqueem who had been captured near Dastampur and later shot in an alleged police encounter last year.

Muslim, who till recently was also associated with Malkhan Singh, a notorious dacoit who surrendered at Bhind recently in Madhya Pradesh, had Ram Sanehi (also from the same gang) as his second-in-command.

In a sense the massacre at Dastampur was avoidable and police officials in their off-the-record statements do admit as much. For Muslim (who had earlier decided to lay down arms along with Malkhan) changed his mind at the last moment, reportedly because he first wished to "settle scores and avenge the death of his brother" for which he maintained only the Yadavs of Dastampur were to be held responsible.

Of the few who had come forward last year to assist in Mustaqueem's capture and had also given evidence against him as well as accepted part of the reward money, each was a marked man. And each was killed except Ganga Charan Yadav, who managed to escape with his family members to Derapur police station 8 km away.

The women had cried at the feet of the killers at Pyarelal's house, but none were spared. Suresh, a 12-year-old child who tried to race to freedom in the darkness, was shot in the back and lay in the dust. Another 7-year-old child Shiromani was riddled with gunshots.

It was a night of terror which would long be remembered. Before the bandits (who had arrived in an open Matador) left Dastampur they shouted another warning: "*Khoon ka badla khoon!*" (Blood for blood.) And yet there was no need for such a threat after the bloody massacre: there was none who would forget easily the high cost of a "betrayal".

In any case, the Yadavs of this village (population: 800) were terrified of reprisals which they knew would come sooner or later ever since Mustaqueem's encounter 14 months ago. They had approached the police for protection but no action was taken.

Within the next four hours news of another killing reached the state capital at Lucknow from Rampura village in Mainpuri where six Harijans were shot dead. The police, who have failed to identify all the killers, conclude that all six were shot dead because they were potential witnesses in several criminal cases against some of the gangsters.

No police official is, of course, prepared to explain just why it is that adequate protection cannot be extended in at least some of the sensitive areas within the listed dacoit-infested districts of Uttar Pradesh. Says a top official: "Our problem is: even if we know where the killers may strike next, we never know when."

—ANAND SAGAR



S. PRASAD

Bereaved Dastampur Women with V.P. Singh: victims of a vendetta

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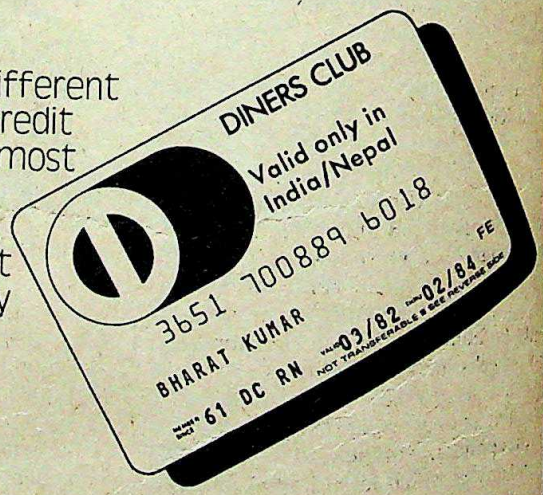
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ratiya Janata Party leader M.P. athi. Later, Bakshi supported the police son in a cabinet meeting. On June 28, the latest atrocity, V.P. Singh was rmed of it 14 hours later.

Outside the Government and the administration, Singh faced a hostile Pradesh gress Committee-I (PCC-I). After the assembly elections which brought the to power, Dharamveer, an arch foe of 's, was replaced as committee president the octogenarian Bishamber Nath ley. Relations between the PCC(I) and Government did not get any better. The organisation did not raise its voice to ter opposition propaganda. Instead, a All India Congress Committee-I (AICC-I) bearers complained to the prime minis- against Singh's style of functioning.

It is to Singh's credit that despite the and faction-ridden organisation, he able to win seven of the nine by-elections for the Assembly and Parliament during mure. However, his failure to establish kind of rapport with the MLA's and the was crippling.

Careful Selection: Uttar Pradesh, with phalanx of 85 Lok Sabha seats, usually des who rules at the Centre and last ught, Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv were pick- their way carefully to a new leader. The t step towards bolstering the confidence the state party was the reappointment of Vasina Kidwai as PCC(I) chief, a welcome sion for the party members. For the big there were a number of contenders n Industry Minister Tiwari, state rgce Minister Brahm Dutt, Veer adur Singh, Dharamveer, Union Deputy ister for Labour Baijnath Kureel, Shiela l and C.P.N. Singh.

Mrs Gandhi put aside a decision for two weeks, making two trips to Uttar desh in the process. It was, indeed, a cult choice: there is hardly any MLA who s the confidence of the entire legislature y and any outsider might find it difficult ing elected to the Assembly within six aths. Rajiv himself met a large number LA's and a dozen ministers.

The winner would, of course, have to be nchingly loyal to family and party, with ability to run the state coming a poor nd. Uttar Pradesh sent Rajiv Gandhi, Nehru, Tiwari and Tripathi to the Lok ha in 1980 and the prime minister has to that their popular bases are not eroded by competent in charge. Her arch-enemy rwati Nandan Bahuguna also has his in the state, all the more reason to have one who can hold the state and the together. Whoever gets the nod will to mix discretion and valour not to go K.P. Singh way.

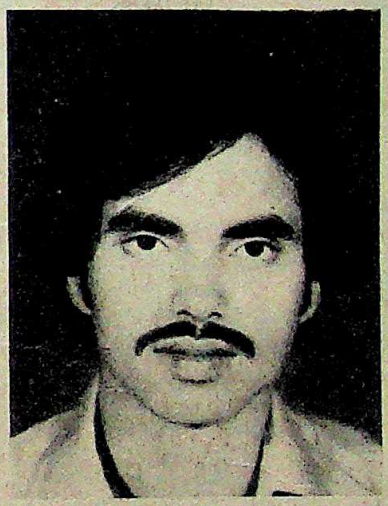
—PRABHU CHAWLA
with ANAND SAGAR in Lucknow

UAE

Reprieve From Death

THE YOUNG man who stepped off the Bombay-Trichur deluxe bus seemed glad to be back. He had good reason to be. Ahmed Abdul Wahab Kutty was returning home one step ahead of the executioner.

Kutty, 23, was sentenced to death by the Al Ain Sharia Court in Abu Dhabi for adultery with a Sri Lankan housemaid, Yasheen Marjiana. The court also sentenced Marjiana to what were described as '100 gentle lashes'. She was then deported from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Kutty was to have been stoned to death on July 4 but before the sentence could be carried out it had caused an international row. The sizeable Mala-



Kutty: hero's welcome

yalee population of Abu Dhabi had protested vociferously. The court's decision was also discussed in the Kerala Assembly and in the Sri Lankan Parliament. Prominent Muslim League leaders in Kerala and the Sri Lankan foreign minister also spoke to Sheikh Tanun Bin Mohammad, the chief administrator of Abu Dhabi requesting him to intervene.

The upshot of these frantic appeals was that the chief justice of UAE instructed the Sharia Bench which had heard the case to reconsider their earlier judgment. It was the first time that there has never been an appeal against a judgment of the Sharia court. But after the international interest in the case the court reconvened and in an unprecedented move reconsidered their earlier decision, sentencing Kutty to 100 lashes and deportation. Said Khadeeja, Kutty's aged mother as she hugged her son: "My son is innocent. He would never have committed such a crime. By Allah's grace my son was saved."

Kutty's 18-year-old wife Suhara Beevi sat by her husband quietly holding their one-year-old son. She was too dumbfounded by the events of the last two months to say anything. She had turned up at the bus stand along with the rest of Varnakkara village 40 km south of Calicut to give Kutty a hero's welcome. A highly disturbed and frightened Kutty said: "I am scared to tell the truth because it was a frame-up by my Arab employer."

False Charges: Kutty went to the Gulf four years ago, after selling all his land to cover the cost of the journey. When he reached Abu Dhabi he found that he was being paid a meagre 100 dirhams per month for working as a cook. He changed jobs last year and joined an Arab firm as a labourer but continued to stay with his former Arab employer. Kutty feels that his former Arab employer was responsible for foisting false charges against him. Said Kutty: "The Arab's home was like a harem with so many women around. Marjiana, the dark Sri Lankan beauty, was working as a maid. She fell in love with a guy from Oman and got pregnant. The Omani took the first flight back as soon as he knew she was pregnant." Kutty says that by this time he had fallen into the bad books of the Arab for switching jobs. One day he was taken to the police station by the Arab and made to sign confessional statements under duress. He spent two months in a comfortable jail before being deported. Said Kutty: "In a month's time I will come out with the startling story of what really happened." He plans to serialise the story in *Chandrika*, the official organ of the Indian Union Muslim League.

Kutty vehemently denies that he was given 100 lashes and blamed the Malayalam papers for blowing up the incident. But despite the harrowing experiences he has undergone during the last two months Kutty's spirits are undimmed. He is now desperately trying for a no objection certificate (NOC) to go to Saudi Arabia. The entire village is backing him in his efforts. Said Kutty, as he puffed away at an imported cigarette: "Look I have lost everything but still I will go to Saudi Arabia and then I will build a house here in Tirur."

—SREEDHAR PILLAI in Tirur

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he Goon Show



BIHAR Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra bears very little resemblance to a Roman emperor except for his Nero-like habit of fiddling while the state burns. Last fortnight, he was up to fiddling once again—this time with ires—with predictable results: a series of arrassing humiliations inside and out- the Assembly followed as his attempt to facts with fiction, demoralise the position through a blizzard of unending tistics and bully the press with hackneyed backfired in his face.

For four consecutive days the state embly witnessed the unprecedented sight opposition members being uncere- iously expelled while another 105 were ily ejected and dumped outside the se. The reason: the Opposition had anded a two-hour special debate on the blooded massacre of 14 persons in alwa and Chilka villages of Monghyr ict on July 3. Commented state Lok Dal f Kapildeo Singh, whose party is the opposition group in the House: "The taken in removing the opposition mem- s from the House on the first day itself ld have been more than enough for the ssion on the subject."

Confrontation: Mishra, who stubbornly ntained the Monghyr massacre was the come of long-standing enmity between groups of criminals and not a communal sh conveniently forgot the fact that ng the victims were two women and five children. Mishra described Speaker Radhanandan Jha's ejection action against the Opposition as a "necessity of circumstances". "If this was not done, the speaker would have failed in his duty," said Mishra. But he once again ignored the fact that while he was piloting the motion for expulsion of members each day he was reinforcing the doubts in the public mind about his own political survival. Said a senior dissident leader: "The party high command has to take serious note of Mishra's behaviour in the House; his action has destroyed the credibility of the party."

The opposition members, who number 132 in the 325-member House, for the first time found the Assembly gates closed in their faces. They had to battle with the police in their attempts to storm the House and also march to the governor to demand Mishra's dismissal. Finally, the Opposition won the round as Mishra again moved a motion to revoke their expulsion and the speaker was forced to allow a special debate on the massacre.

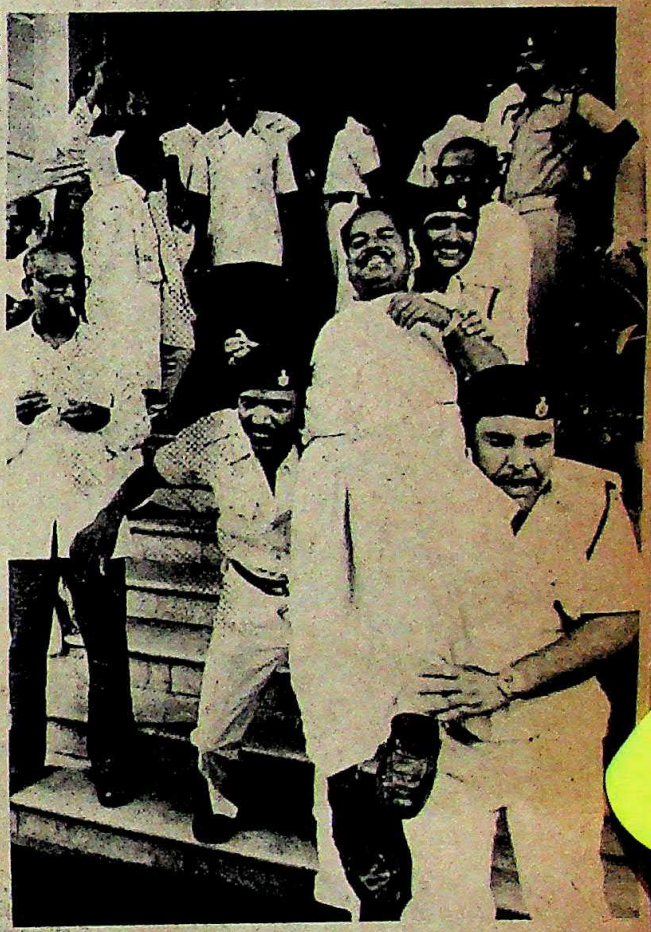
False Claims: Mishra had obviously gambled on the tragic truth that in Bihar blood-letting does not make news anymore. But what is making a lot of news is Mishra's claim of total peace on all fronts and the ostrich-like behaviour of his administration. Mishra goes about telling the people that they are "free to move out without fear"; that there is total communal harmony in the state, and Harijans, Adivasis and other weaker sections are fully secure under his government.

"The law and order situation in my state," Mishra told the National Development Council meeting presided over by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on March 14 in Delhi, "is normal and people are free to go about their daily business without fear. Only four communal incidents were reported in 1981 and no mass atrocity against Harijans and other weaker sections took place in the state during the past two years." Mishra repeated the claim in the Assembly on July 2, the same day that the outskirts of the state capital were hit by communal violence, claiming seven lives in Phulwarisharif. But opposition leader Karpoori Thakur destroyed Mishra's claim by revealing that 2,435 murders were committed in 1981 in Bihar.

Official statistics support Thakur's claim. Apart from 2,435 murders there were 3,343 dacoities and 11,350 riots. Besides, during the first six months of this year, altogether 42,381 cognisable offences were committed of which 1,145 were murders. Police sources said that at least 50 cases of communal violence and an equal number of atrocities on Harijans were reported during the past two years.

And, if the statistics paint a grim picture, they are also an indication of the current doubts about Mishra's own future. The cosmetics have started to crack under the heat and are exposing the diseased face below. But the big question is: how many more senseless carnages will it take before the Centre realises that the fire in Bihar could easily spread and engulf its own carefully-guarded bastions elsewhere? Time is obviously running out.

—FARZAND AHMED



K.M. KISHAN

An opposition MLA being carried out of the Assembly



Mishra: ostrich-like behaviour

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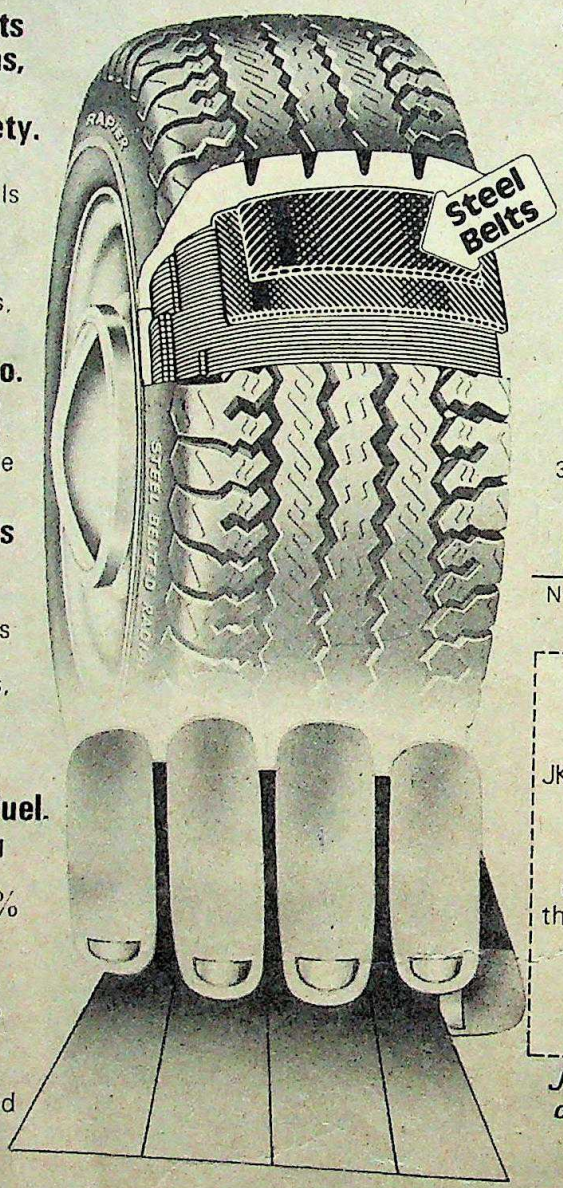
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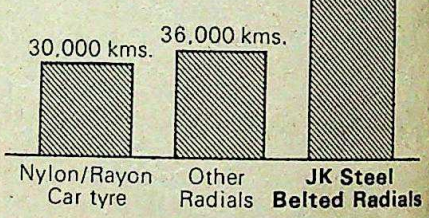


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AM

e Ambushers Ambushed

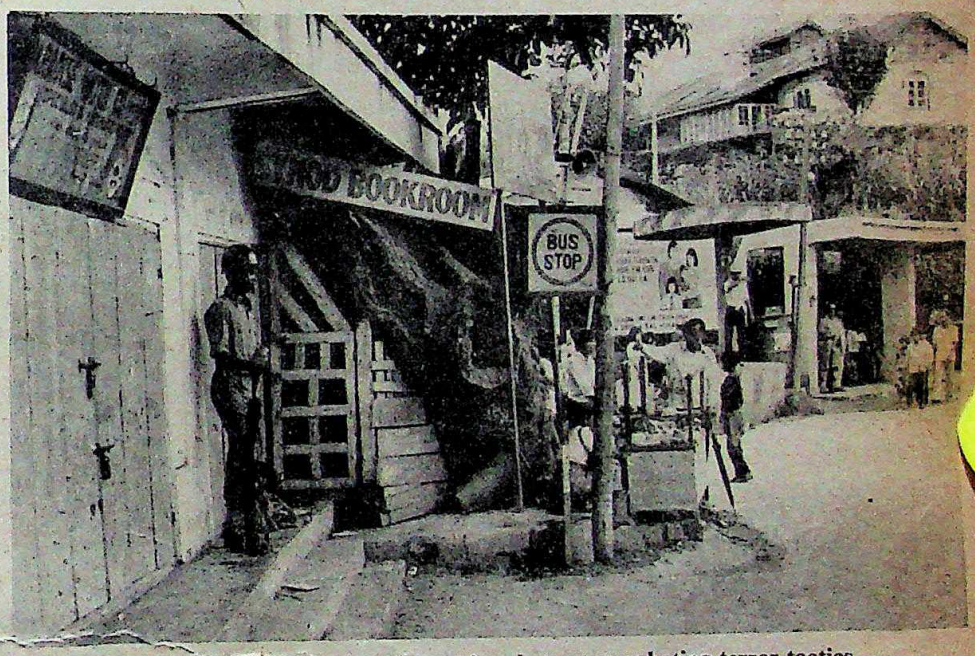
FOR THE small band of armed men who lay in ambush near Darlawn in eastern Aizawl district, the elements could not have been more adverse. It had rained heavily. They were behind and operating in not very familiar Yet, on that morning of June 30 e not to return empty-handed. te oblivious of their presence, an Mizo walked past nonchalantly. And is guerrilla instinct could warn him anger lurking in the jungle, he was ered by men lying in ambush. It was on Mizo hill scenario, only the roles reversed. Self-styled Sergeant Dar- of the outlawed Mizo National ad been caught by an elite com- group of the Mizoram Criminal ation Department (CID) which in- strong complement of the Mizoram l Front (MNF) returnees.

was a creditable catch. Operating far e international borders, this ruthless d evaded capture for over a month e of the most intense combing oper- launched in Mizoram in recent times. geant, along with three privates, was ible for killing both the government ees who fell victims to the MNF in the d round of killings. He had led the hlian ambush in which CRPF Deputy ndant I.S. Dagar was killed. He had ortedly organised the brutal murder Chander, a junior intelligence officer Central Intelligence Bureau at Ratu, Mizoram-Manipur border and about from Darlawn. Man Chander, who rom Delhi, was stabbed in the neck as reading some documents inside his

fective Measures: Darchhunga's cap- nfirmed a trend—a happy one from vernment's point of view—which be- h the banning of the MNF in January. nd more captures are being made by al police and CID, composed almost ely of Mizos. This has advantages: al people find it easier and safer to ate with the police. The army is the expensive and pointless exercise ing scores of troops on the trail of a elusive guerrilla whom they do not ise. Most important, such measures ountered the new MNF tactics of not into a fight with the armed forces electively assassinating unarmed non- o spread panic.

ice officers in Aizawl are jubilant at the successes and there are many who claim that this policy has led to the sudden disappearance of the guerrillas from the scene. After the initial round of 12 killings there has been no MNF activity. Said a senior officer: "All the MNF groups have been told by their commanders to melt into the bush for regrouping and to cover their tracks. We have by no means finished them but they were certainly taken by surprise."

The MNF made a miscalculation. Its tactics of infiltrating the towns with small, three to four strong die-hard bands carrying small weapons was meant to bypass the army. It ignored the police factor. Intelligence sensors are now tuned to the MNF tactical headquarters where its commanders are believed to be reappraising their tactics.



An armed BSF soldier guards an Aizawl street: combating terror tactics

Intelligence agencies feel the next round will come soon, and not only will the MNF have a different *modus operandi*, even the targets will be different.

Friction: But while there is much to rejoice over among government circles about the police successes, there are reasons for worry. The coordination between the police and the army has been poor, which is one of the reasons why the army has been less than active during the last two months. Army officers often say it is impossible for them to collect tactical intelligence. "This is what the police must give us and we will strike. The police, on the other hand, prefer to follow up their intelligence themselves as it brings them publicity. Same operations can be carried out more effectively by us," said a field commander operating in south Mizoram. But the feeling in civil circles is that the army planning is, by its very nature, elaborate and involves visible movements of troops, which serves to alert the rebels. Obviously, there is much to be sorted out, by the lieutenant-governor and chief minister.

Difficulties have arisen in the recent past. Although Brigadier Sailo's Government has tried to keep the army happy, it had no choice but to join in its public criticism when Sangthuama, a tailor accused of stitching MNF uniforms died in the custody of the 6th Battalion, the Assam Rifles (under the army) near Champhai in eastern Mizoram (along the border with Burma). The army initially said the tailor had committed suicide on the night of May 29 inside his cell in the battalion headquarters at Seling. But few believed the story and the chief minister shot off a cable to the chief of the army staff seeking intervention and an inquiry. The incident led to some bickering between the civil and military set-ups. But the latest evidence seems to put the army version under a cloud. The civil doctor's autopsy report says that the tailor died of internal haemorrhage. An inquiry is now on.

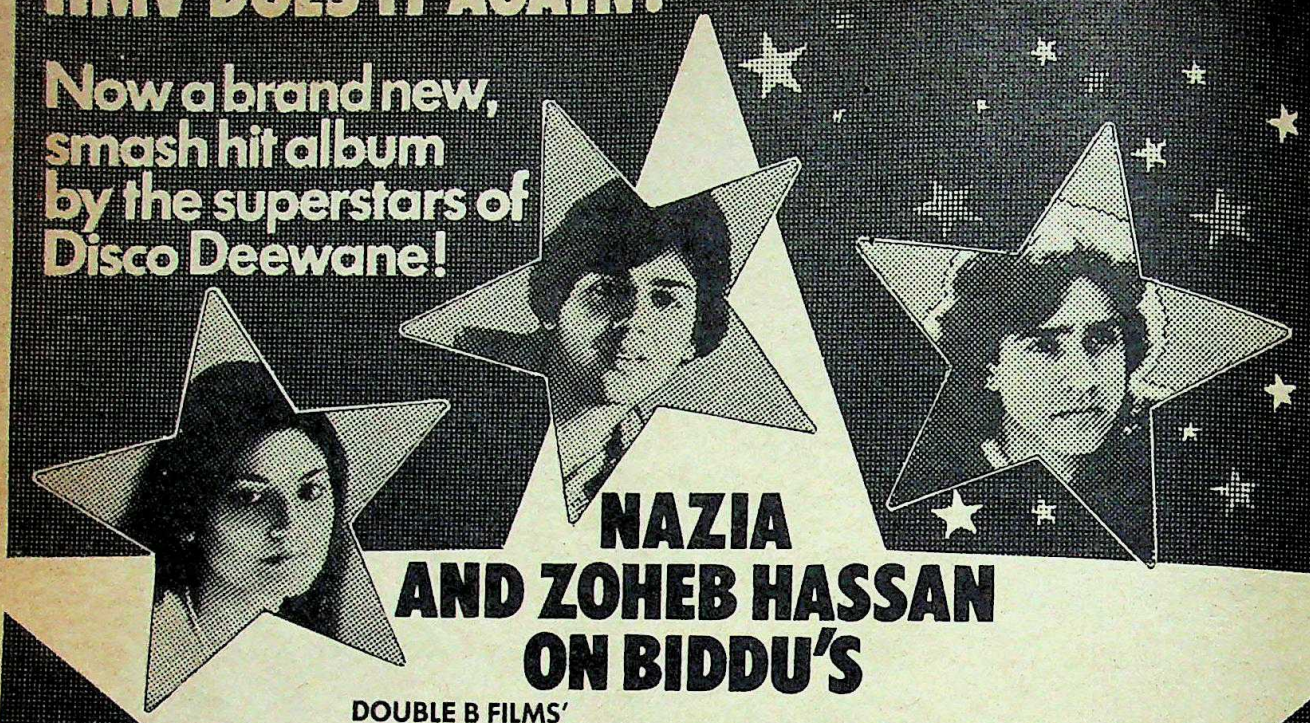
This apart, there has not been any major irritant. The problem is of coordination between so many agencies operating simultaneously in a disturbed area. Said a senior officer: "In a democratic set-up you do not have a unified command system and so you have to bear with the pinpricks." In Delhi, officials of the Defence and Home Ministries—presently under a common minister—are trying to sort out precisely this problem at a series of joint meetings.

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RE-KASHMIR RELATIONS

Uncertain Lull

SHEIKH Mohammad Abdullah's health more than anything else has been responsible for the sudden thaw in Delhi-Srinagar relations. For a while last month Kashmir teetered on the of an insoluble crisis: while the prickly lement Bill hung fire, the Sheikh grew belligerent and the Centre seemed trap- a peculiar inertia. Then, on June 8, the h fell ill after a hectic trip to Doda. s fears grew about the Sheikh's sur- Delhi at last woke up to the urgency of tuation. The Sheikh's death would a bitter succession fight between his d party president Farooq Abdullah s son-in-law G.M. Shah; worse still, olent emotions let loose by the con- ition of the weeks past would seriously





Shah (left) and Farooq: contenders



Sheikh Abdullah and Mrs Gandhi: getting better?

rdise the state's future politics.

Indira Gandhi reacted in her usual on—in a very well-timed move, she d Srinagar on June 24 for a four-day tion' with son Rajiv and Sonia. The hat she drove directly to the Sheikh's ence to pay her respects advertised her l mission—to effect a quick patch up. days later, she called on the Sheikh.

Tension Reduced: Luck was also on the minister's side. As the Sheikh, helped pert medical aid from Delhi, regained trength, the National Conference (NC) to wave the olive branch. INDIA TODAY arnt that the two sides have agreed to a gradual de-escalation of tension. Since the Resettlement Bill in any case is awaiting Governor B.K. Nehru's approval, it will be returned unapproved to the state Assembly. Thereafter, the Assembly will delay a second vote on the bill—probably until elections are held either late this year or in early 1983—after which the bill could die a quiet death.

The prime minister's visit was a catalyst in other ways. It exacerbated conflict between the moderate Farooq and the hard-line Shah—and Farooq has temporarily gained the upper hand. He may soon be inducted into the Cabinet—in which case he will have to relinquish membership of the Lok Sabha. More significantly, the Sheikh signalled conciliation by announcing his party's support for Congress(I) presidential candidate Zail Singh. Shah and the hard-liners, who were vehemently against this step, were silenced by the issuance of a whip to all NC legislators to vote for Zail Singh.

"We have never wanted confrontation with the Centre," says Farooq, "although there is continuing confrontation with the state Congress(I) unit." That Mrs Gandhi's visit had also polarised Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the feisty state Congress(I) chief, and Syed Mir Qasim, who wants *rapprochement* with the Sheikh, was also obvious. Sayeed last week made a tough anti-Sheikh speech in Jammu, and observers noted that Mir Qasim had not sought to derive advantage from the current thaw by trying to neutralise Sayeed.

"The longer two democratic and secular parties like our National Conference and the Congress(I) fight, the more the communalists will gain," says Farooq. "Why should the Bharatiya Janata Party continue harping on Hindu sentiments in the Jammu area?"

Post-Sheikh Situation: Sources in Srinagar who have picked Mir Qasim's brains at length say that he is on the verge of quitting the Congress(I). Mir Qasim's strategy has all along been to patch up with the NC, 'infiltrate' the ruling party, and gradually take it over in order to salvage the post-Sheikh situation. Now, it appears he is growing impatient with Mufti Sayeed's confrontationism, and might even join the NC soon. "That will be a major blow for the Congress(I)," says an insider, "because our betting is that with Mir Qasim in our ranks, the moderates in the National Conference will defect to our side if there is a post-Sheikh struggle between Farooq and Shah."

"There is no doubt at all that the National Conference and the Congress(I) will fight the elections separately," says Farooq. The Sheikh's heir-apparent is keenly aware of Kashmir's larger position in the Indo-Pakistani imbroglio. During a recent five- week trip to the United States, he says he discussed betterment of Indo-US relations with high-ranking Congressional leaders in Washington.

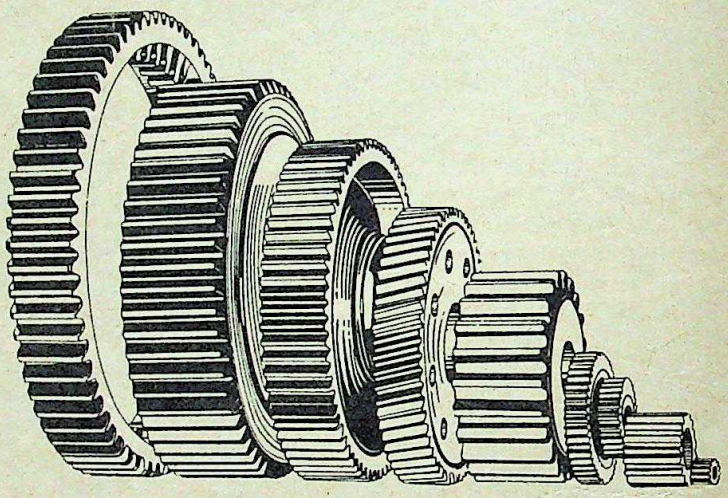
But he does not agree that Pakistan is pursuing a stick-in-the-mud policy in regard to Kashmir. "Why blame them alone?" he asks. "After all, India believes too that Kashmir is disputed, and that the Simla Agreement has settled the issue once and for all. Does it mean that there were doubts until the agreement was signed by Bhutto and Mrs Gandhi?"

Whatever be the outcome of the current lull in Centre-Kashmir relations, it is clear that Delhi has an uncertain period ahead. The powerful Shah has been momentarily isolated: Farooq's mother, Begum Abdullah, who sided more with Shah, has now "crossed over" to the Sheikh-Farooq "camp". Corruption has also begun to tarnish Shah's paramountcy among the NC rank and file—the latest topic of controversy is the state Government-marshalled allotment of three lucrative flour mills near Srinagar to Shah's surrogates. —CHAITANYA KALBAG

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...e Card Trick



Qadir: a cosy racket

GHULAM Qadir had a cosy little racket going. Every once in a while the 34-year-old stenographer in the state Power Department would oblige contractors by issuing them registration permitting them to work as civil contrs to build anything from roads to buildings. Qadir, of course, did not ...e authority to issue the cards but for a ... would print fake cards, prepare the ...d forge the signature of the chief ...er of the civil investigation and de...ivision of the Power Department. ...adir's game might have gone on for...d it not been for a stroke of bad luck. ...e to an end, however, when an irate ...ctor, who did not know Qadir per..., walked into the offices of the Power ...tment and, mistaking the personal assistant of the chief engineer for Qadir, accused him of not honouring a promise to give him a contractor's card.

Profitable Activities: The altercation set the wheels of justice moving, but it was only when the police delved deeper that they realised the full extent of Qadir's activities. The young stenographer had during a three-year spell issued more than 1,000 cards to contractors. Each of the cards issued by him was worth its weight in gold as a card signed by a chief engineer permits contractors to get work with any government department. Qadir's charges were quite moderate, varying from Rs 300 to Rs 1,000 depending on the category of the permit wanted.

Qadir did his work with great skill. Even Chief Engineer Qazi Ghulam Rasul whose signature was forged, confesses that he cannot tell his own signature. Says Qazi: "It was really difficult for me to make out Qadir's signature and mine." In the end it was the serial numbers that enabled investigators to make out the fakes from the real ones. While the Power Department had issued only 128 certificates, Qadir's numbers ran from 600 onwards.

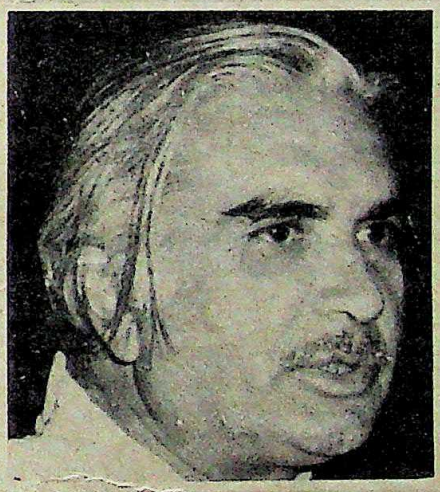
As yet the exact amount that Qadir made has not been ascertained. Police have

...OLKAR PALACE

...A Costly Case

ROYALTY and their palaces are the very stuff of fairy-tales. So it is hardly surprising that even eight ...ears of prolonged hearings have failed to ...ampen public interest in the defamation ...se against Suresh Seth, the editor of the *...dore Samachar*. The case landed up in ...urt after a local business family, the ...aslivals, sued Seth for alleging that they ...d paid black money when they bought ...e Holkar palace known as the Juna ...ajbada in 1974.

Last month, in a wide-ranging judg...ent that touched on various aspects of ...eedom of the press, District Judge R.C. ...hare found Seth, who is also a Con...gress(I) MLA, guilty and awarded three ...laintiffs—Deokumar Singh Kaslival, ...jitkumar Singh Kaslival, and ...radeepkumar Singh Kaslival—a total ...um of Rs 7,500 by way of general dama...es. The paltry sum may have come as a ...amp squib to the plaintiffs who had ...sked for an astronomical Rs 87 ...akh in damages. Yet Seth stuck to his ...uns, insisting: "I am proud of my own ...nd my paper's role in publishing the ...entiments of the people of Indore in ...egard to the sale of the historic Rajbada ...palace) to a private trader", and added ...In a democracy the press must voice the ...entiments of the people without any ...rejudice."



Seth: sticking to his guns

Defamatory: The judge while absolving Seth on other counts, found him guilty of mentioning the use of black money in reports carried in his paper. The judgment said: "There is reference to black money (*kaladhan*) having been used by the purchasers in the case.... using black money in the purchase of the old palace is defamatory per se.... It was for the defendants to substantiate that the publication was true." He added that while, "there may be general feeling or knowledge about the use of black money by traders in the country" it was quite a different matter to make a specific allegation against a person or a group.

The protracted legal wrangling has taken much of the heat out of the controversy. When the sale of the Juna Rajbada first became public knowledge it aroused a considerable furore. The reasons for this were not really surprising. The 250-year-old palace lies squarely in the centre of the city.

The story of how the Rajbada ended up on sale is a convoluted one. The Holkar dynasty ended with the late Yeswantrao Holkar. His Indian wife did not bear him any children and his son Richard by his American wife was not recognised as the heir. His only daughter Usharaje married a Bombay businessman named Satish Malhotra. To cover the estate duty after Yeswantrao's death, Malhotra quietly sold the property to the Kaslivals, a local businessman. But in the uproar which followed the sale, the Government acquired the palace.

The court decision may not have put a final seal on the dispute. Says Seth: "I told the court that this case was filed to intimidate the press. We are going to appeal against the judgment." On the other side Ajitkumar Singh Kaslival, said to be the main force behind the litigation says that despite the paltry damages: "The court has vindicated our stand." Kaslival admits that financially it has been a costly affair. He says that lawyers' fees including consultation costs have come to over Rs 20,000. But then perhaps any losses incurred have to be written off as the cost of preserving a good name.

—DINESH AWASTHI

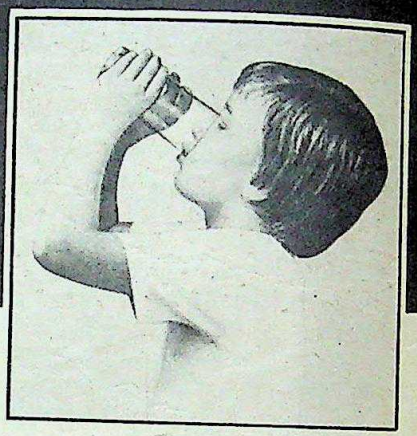
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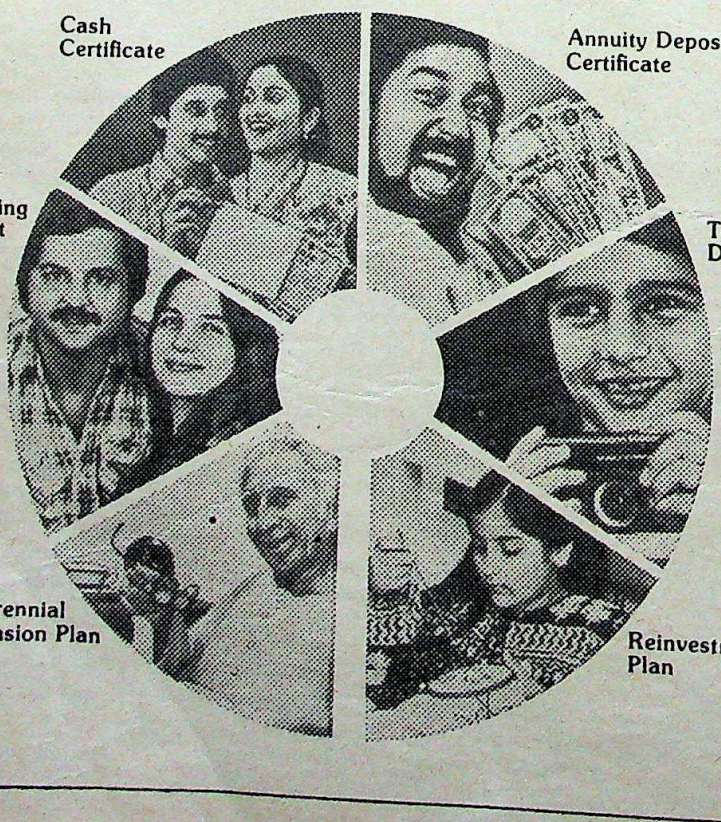
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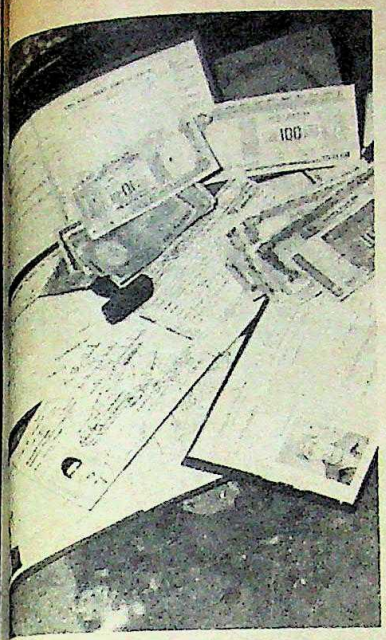
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rds and money recovered from Qadir

number of blank cards, documents davits filed by applicants from his nd office. Estimates are that Qadir s 3 lakh from his transactions though pected that this may be a gross under-e. Qadir himself plays down the he has received, saying: "I pur-land in my wife's name and I engaged ve tutors for my children. Then I d over to drinking and womanising."

or Quality: Qadir may not have uch from his deals but there is no that several contractors have made nounts from the same transactions. er officials in the Public Works ment (PWD) point out that hurriedly ublic works could never be of a very uality. Several contractors have been by the crime branch team led by Mahmood Mir. Mir is determined to l the culprits to book. About 50 cards een surrendered by contractors will-However, the wealthy contractors are their best to pressure the police to p the case. Mir is unrelenting: "We'll o haul up all of them for they are y responsible."

esides this, another important ques-ised by the affair is why the various ns of the PWD did not bother to verify idity of the cards, especially when rge numbers of them were floating d. As a result, many people are asking er other senior officers besides Qadir so party to the underhand deals. This s to be investigated. But while Qadir een caught and put behind bars, the s carried out by dubious contractors is permission are still scattered all over e.

—GHULAM NABI KHAYAL

RELIGION

Temple Tussle

THE RESIDENTS of Nadia village 33 km from Rajnandgaon district, are using the instrument of passive resistance to claim what they believe is their collective right. In a show of stubbornness villagers last fortnight completed their second month of picketing the local temple round the clock. They feel the priest is misusing property that they claim is rightfully theirs. The village, rarely visited by outsiders, consists of followers of Saint Kabir, and are known as Kabir Panthis.

The Kabir *math* in the village dates back nearly two centuries, and the plot of land on which it stands was donated by a villager to Sewa Das, a devoted follower of Kabir. As donations tumbled in, the *math* grew in size and seven *mahants* followed after Das's exit. Today the *math* has a simple place of worship consisting of Kabir's *samadhi*. Another temple adjacent has the *samadhis* of the eight *mahants* who have presided. The two temples stand in the courtyard of the sprawling old mansion which forms part of the *math*'s property.

Transfer: The villagers now claim that the building and the land were the property of the *math* till transferred to the name of a *mahant*; the chieftan of a near by village, Niaz Ali Khan, had begun to stake his claim to the *math*'s land. In spite of the transfer, the *math*'s running remained undisturbed, till 1946 when the eighth *mahant*, Bhoop Das was murdered under mysterious circumstances.

By the time Ganga Das, the current *mahant* took over, the land under his charge had swelled to 345 acres. Hemmed in by land ceiling laws, Ganga Das with out informing villagers, transferred it to the name of some of his friends and later began to dispose of it. When the villagers got wind of this they protested. But Das retaliated and complained to the police that he was being harassed. He registered cases against 47 villagers, including women. Meanwhile his holding attracted the Government's attention and a case was filed in court, where it still remains.

In a memorandum to the district collector in mid-April the villagers demanded that Ganga Das be removed from his position; that he be prevented from selling the property and that a trust be formed. But the district administrator's attempts to break the stalemate have failed. Says one official: "There's very little we can do. The case is in the court and the land is shown in records as belonging to Ganga Das."



Demonstrators outside the *math*: show of stubbornness

Das has meanwhile inducted some armed men from nearby Bhilai and in retaliation the villagers have sought support from the controversial union leader Shanker Guha Niyogi, whose headquarters in Dali Rajhara is only 60 km from Nadia. For the last two months women have been squatting in front of the *math*'s only door, day in and day out. Paddy and pulses from the disputed land is piled all over the *math* and the picketers, objective is to ensure that none of it is sold surreptitiously until the dispute is settled. And by the looks of it, the coming monsoon is not going to cool tempers in Nadia.

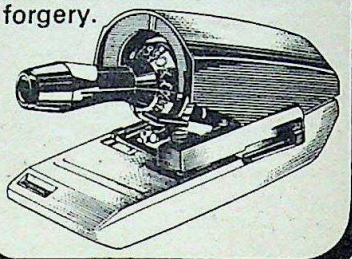
—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

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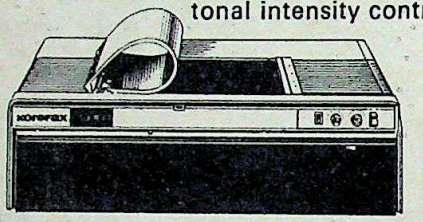
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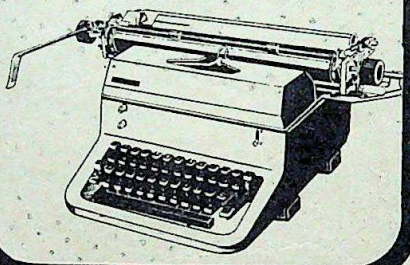
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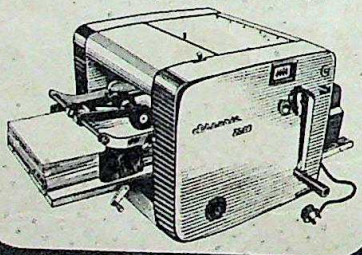
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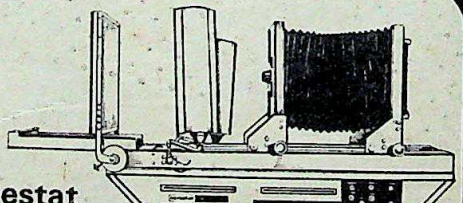
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KA

amatic Departure

WITH assembly elections in the state due at year's-end battle lines are swiftly being drawn across Karnataka's political field. Last fortnight, Sarekoppada Bangarappa, 49, chief dissident in gress(I) Government headed by ao, finally quit the party along with er legislative assembly members new impetus to the flagging oppod ruffling Rao's complacency.

arappa's resignation came as a jolt ngress(I). Not even the party high d had expected him to take such a ep. On the day of his resignation rayana Rao, All India Congress s(I) general secretary in charge of a, flew to Bangalore to try and woo . The same evening an agitated pa announced his decision to re- the party at a press conference. his resignation letter mailed to Mrs andhi, with a long explanation, pa accused her of turning a blind e charges of corruption and malad- ion levelled against Gundu Rao. He ally added at his press conference: quitting I sympathise with Mrs for her political ignorance and ss for trusting men like Rao."

departure had a mixed reaction e party. "We are not worried," said nna, the newly appointed acting of the Karnataka Pradesh Committee-I (KPCC-I), "his depar- not even make a dent." But there are the party who feel that the high d should not have pushed him agai- all especially because he had re- oyal to Mrs Gandhi even when she of power. Sensing their conster- athyanarayana Rao assured them high command would certainly give alists" a better deal even though they nored by their respective chief s.

alty: Ever since he was sidelined by Rao in January last year Bangarappa jockeying for a return to centre ain. A former socialist, Bangarappa e Congress in 1977 and became a minister in the Devraj Urs ent. When Urs parted company Gandhi Bangarappa stuck on with was made president of the ad hoc When Urs resigned after his party's ka debacle Bangarappa lost the race ministership to Rao who was closer e Sanjay Gandhi and was able to convince Mrs Gandhi that he could form a stable government with "home-comers". Although he was given the key portfolios of revenue and agriculture in Rao's cabinet Bangarappa remained hostile to him. Finally Rao got the high command's permission to drop him but Bangarappa refused to be sacked and went out only when Mrs Gandhi accepted his resignation letter.

Since then, Bangarappa has become the focal point of dissidence in the state. In August last year he sent a list of 60 charges against Rao to Mrs Gandhi asking for his removal. Initially the high command encouraged his dissidence but after realising that his position was getting weaker chose to



Bangarappa announces his resignation

ignore him. The last straw came last month when three of his supporters, M. Raghupathy, Abdul Nazir Sab and T.V. Venkatswamy, were denied council seats and only Rao's nominees were chosen.

With Urs' death a vacuum had developed and Bangarappa decided to fill it up partially. Interestingly, his decision to quit was taken at a meeting of opposition leaders in Kalahalli, Urs' hometown, where they had all gathered to pay their respects at his eleventh day death ceremony. Present at the meeting were Bangarappa, Raghupathy, Janata Party president S.R. Bommai, Lok Dal leader George Fernandes and Kranti Ranga president J.H. Patel. July 6 was chosen for Bangarappa's resignation as it was exactly one month after Urs death.

Mounting Opposition: The identification with Urs is particularly significant as Bangarappa is likely to join the Kranti Ranga after he holds a convention of "like-minded" Congress(I) workers on July 18. As Bangarappa's main grouse against Rao is that he has neglected the backward classes the Kranti Ranga is a convenient platform to fight the coming elections as Urs' did a lot for this section.

Bangarappa's ace is matinee idol Raj Kumar who comes from the same caste group, Edigas, as he does. Even if Kumar does not join politics, Bangarappa is likely to use the film star's popularity to counter Mrs Gandhi's charisma in the state. He is so confident of Kumar's support that he reportedly told his close friends: "If Raj Kumar joins politics he will do it only with me." The Congress(I) is definitely worried about these developments and sources close to Gundu Rao said: "Our main threat is not Bangarappa but Raj Kumar."

Bangarappa's entry may rejuvenate the Opposition. The Janata Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party, the two major forces in the state, have reportedly agreed to join forces with him. D.B. Chandre Gowda, a former state president of the Congress who defected to the Congress(I), is now back in Kranti Ranga again, and is another factor for Rao to contend with. Lok Dal leader George Fernandes has decided to make Bangalore his base after Urs' death and although the party has no strength in the state his personal popularity may help. What the opposition parties are working towards is a straight fight with the Congress(I) which is the only way of defeating it. Said Bommai: "Bangarappa's resignation is the beginning of the end of Congress(I) rule in the state."

Although outwardly showing no signs of their concern for opposition unity the back room talk in Congress(I) circles is that the advancing of the state elections to November this year is being seriously considered. The final decision will be weighed along with the situation in Andhra Pradesh. Meanwhile, a move to replace Rao with his colleague Dharam Singh is still in its dormant stage. But within the party a power struggle is on between the four main caste groups: the Vokkaligas, Lingayats, backward classes and minorities. Among the Vokkaligas H.C. Srikantiah, a state cabinet minister, is the strongest candidate. Although Union Minister Veerendra Patil heads the Lingayats this section is strongly backing Rao. The backward classes prefer Union Minister B. Shankaranand while Jaffer Sharief, Union minister of state, has staked his claim on the ground that the state has not had a minority chief minister as yet, though Rao might just find himself in a minority if Bangarappa's bandwagon gains momentum.

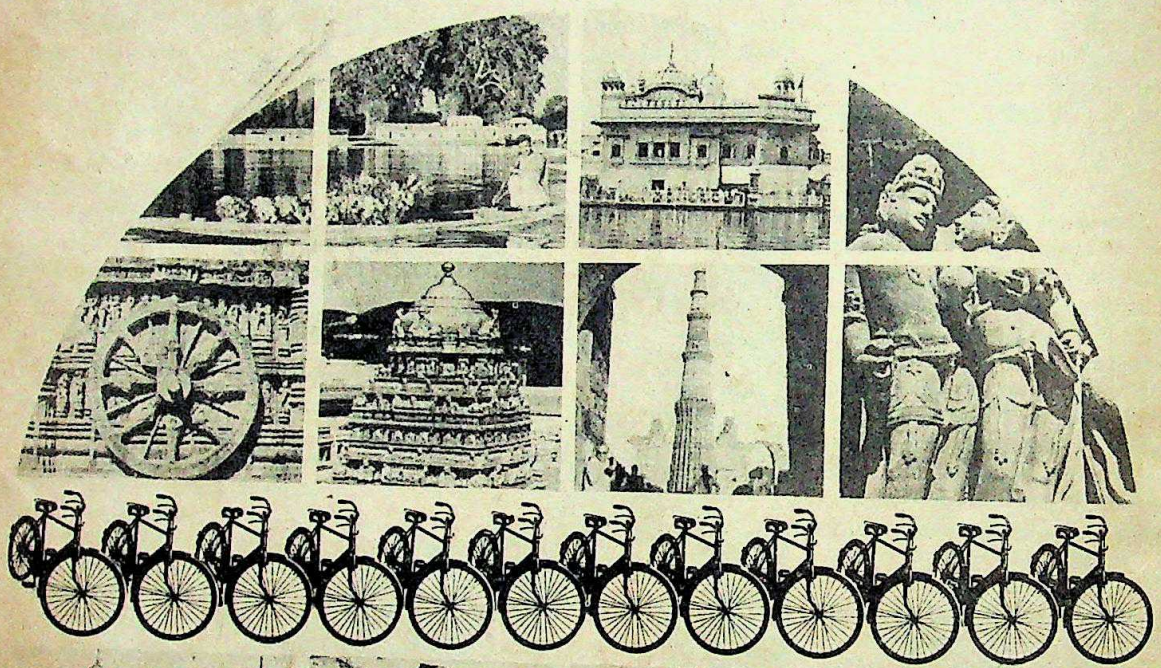
—RAJ CHENGAPPA

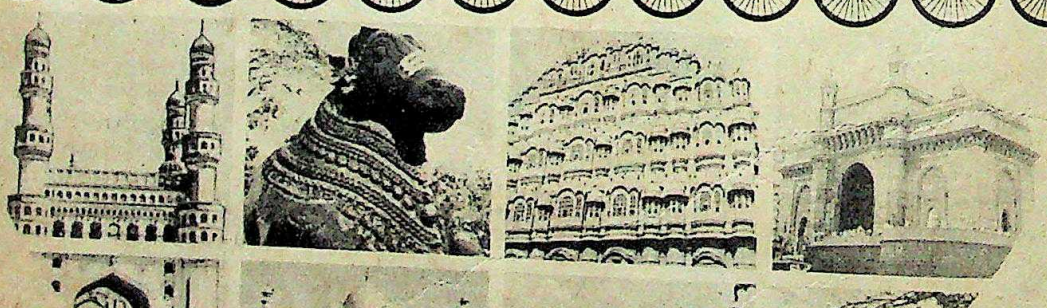
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AKA

e Forest Fiddle

RNATAKA's Chief Minister marao Gundu Rao seems to have a knack for putting his fingers in ist of scandals. Last fortnight he again in the dense jungle of contro- en he enthusiastically tried to fulfil on promise of raising the absurdly s of forest produce. Instead of praise Rao was indicted by the Accounts Committee (PAC) of the slature for showing favouritism to industry while revising the forest sulting in an enormous loss of Rs 22 the exchequer.

charge is far more serious than the ment scandal exposed by the PAC in ist which accused Rao of illegally 4,000 tonnes of cement to 32

ao is certainly going o find it difficult to iggle out of this one. Unlike in the cement scandal, he has maintained a discreet ence preferring to air his views when the tter is discussed soon in the Assembly.

(INDIA TODAY, March 15, 1982). C Chairman S.R. Bommai: "The sufficient to have him dismissed. He moral right to continue." In a bid empt the PAC report on the day to be presented in the Assembly e Gowda, minister of state for forests, ced a new set of forest rates, a that had been pending for a year and rter. Karnataka Kranti Ranga nt J.H. Patel remarked sarcastically: s precedence to the new rates over the ort is like the tail getting priority over d."

rong Criticism: Even within the ruling e tail seemed to be wagging the head ough out of the total of 15 members PAC nine belong to Congress(I) the had an easy passage. The voting was six for and four against. Five ss(I) members, U.B. Borkar, Abdul Sab, S.S. Mahajan Shetty, P. Mulki and Ramesh Kumar, absented themselves from the committee meeting. The remaining four offered only technical objections and approved of the text of the report after these were overruled. In fact during the PAC deliberations the Congress(I) members questioned forest officials with a gusto not matched by the others. Complained one official who appeared before the PAC: "We were



Gundu Rao: entangled in controversy



Bommai: strong indictment

instructed more by the Congress(I) members."

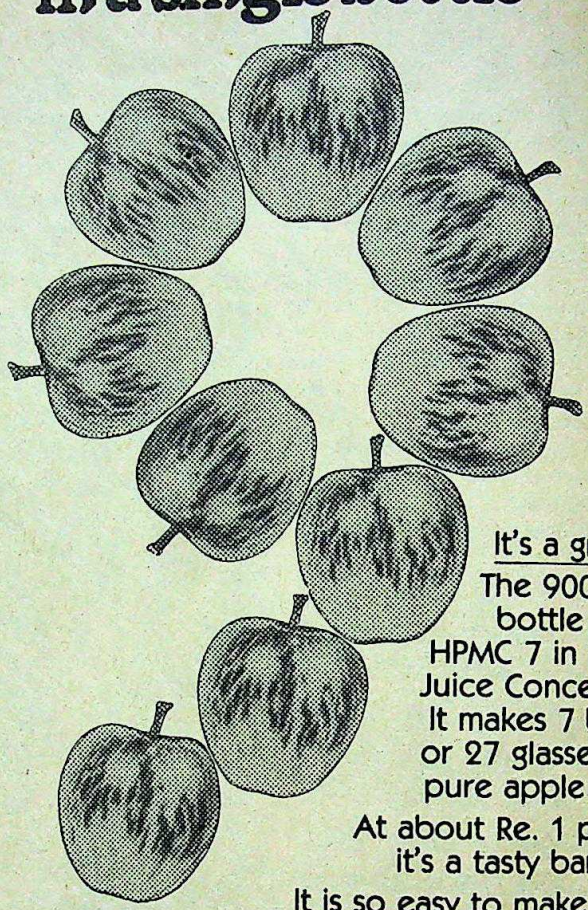
Rao is certainly going to find it difficult to wriggle out of this one. Unlike in the cement scandal, he has maintained a discreet silence, preferring to air his views when the matter is discussed soon in the Assembly. But the circumstantial evidence against the Government in the report has raised much suspicion especially as the rates were first hiked steeply, and a year later after an official committee went into the revision of rates, lowered even more sharply. Alleged Bommai: "This is Rao's *modus operandi* for collecting huge funds. He first raises the rates and then under pressure from industry chops it."

INDIA TODAY investigations reveal that the entire controversy actually began on December 11, 1980, at a meeting of forest officials held in the forest secretary's dingy office where it was decided that the rates of forest produce should be raised and supply of wood stopped till then. Accordingly, on December 16, 1980 a government directive was issued by the chief conservator of forests (general) preventing the lifting of any wood by industries. The paper, rayon and plywood industries protested immediately and Harihar Polyfibres, the largest consumer of eucalyptus in the state, got a stay order from the High Court. The plywood industries appealed to the state Government and at a meeting with the chief minister on January 4, 1981 agreed to pay any revised rates fixed by the Government with retrospective effect -but wanted the wood to be supplied till then. After getting a written statement from

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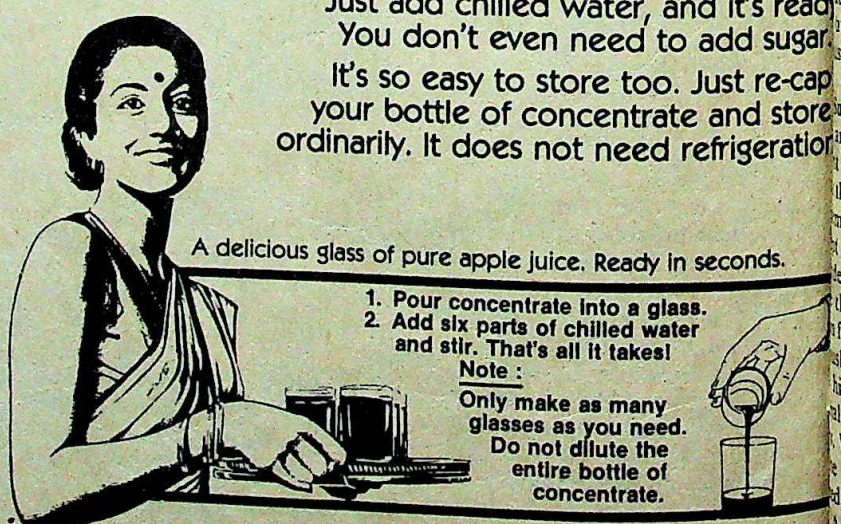
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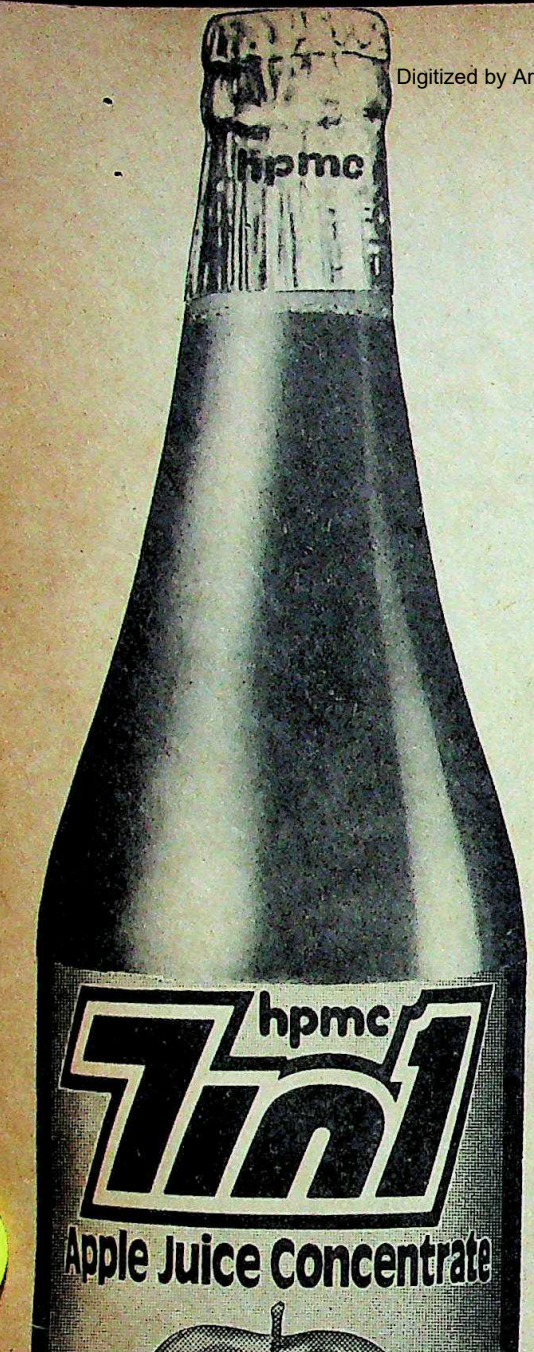
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wood industries the Government is- directive the next day staying its ber 16 order and allowing them to lift upply of wood.

was then that forest officials realised ey would have to face a legal hurdle revising the rates because most of the was supplied under long-term agree- which the Government had entered ith the various industries. For in- Harihar Polyfibres had signed an ent with the Government (GO No 37 FDP 79 dated 19.7.1979) by which overnment would supply 2.05 lakh of eucalyptus up to 2001 A.D. and sell the wood at Rs 65 a tonne up to ber 31, 1986, and after that at Rs 150 e up to 2001 A.D. West Coast Paper had entered into a 30-year agreement he Government on August 13, 1955 pply of 1 lakh of bamboo a t a price of 12 a tonne. of the plywood matchwood in- s have entered ive-year agree- with the Gover- for the supply oftwood which to run to 1983. the existing sions of the fo- aw the Govern- could not hike tes of the pro- nless there was se in the respective agreements to do

uggested Amendment: To overcome in amendment was suggested in the t Act which would give the Govern- the power to annul all the rates in the ments and compel the industries to the new rates. When forest officials ed out Rao he was enthusiastic and the green signal. Anticipating oppo- from the industry the officials decided sh through the amendment discreetly hike the rates steeply. Admitted one al: "We behaved like a bunch of ama- . We thought by hiking the rates even e industry protested, the final rates d upon would be much higher."

As the amendment was to be pushed gh on February 23, 1981, the officers ed out the new rates within four days by February 19 the Government an- ced the new rates. According to it yptus prices which varied from Rs 44 s 65 were raised to Rs 810 a tonne. oo prices shot up by 300 per cent from to Rs 180 a tonne and softwood went m Rs 177 to Rs 900 a cubic metre.

When the amendment came into force the industry kicked up a hue and cry and within five days on February 28, 1981 under instructions from the chief minister, the chief secretary issued a directive staying the new rates "pending further consideration" and asking the forest department to collect a bank guarantee from the industries amounting to the difference between the new and the old rates "for a fortnight or so".

Strangely enough, after eight days the chief secretary issued another directive on March 8, 1981 that the chief minister "desired" that the bank guarantee be reduced to Rs 5 lakh in the case of plywood industries. Out of the 19 plywood industries the big two, Indian Plywoods and Mafatlal Plywoods, who account for 70 per cent of the total of 1 lakh cubic metres consumed by the plywood industry annually, would be the biggest beneficiaries. Each would have had to cough up at least Rs 1 crore as guarantee according to the original order. In the case of Harihar Polyfibres the guarantee would have been Rs 8 crore and for West Coast Paper Mills, Rs 1.6 crore. Both Polyfibres and West Coast filed writ petitions in the High Court and obtained stay orders on the new rates.


HARIESH SAGAR

A forest plantation in Karnataka: source of wealth

Several aspects of the Government's actions were questionable:

► While announcing the new rates the approval of the Commerce and Industries Department was not obtained or sought. As the forest produce is consumed by industries this is normally sought. The Forest Department now admitted to the PAC that while fixing the new rates "the impact of this on the industry was not considered"

► Investigations show that no civil servant had recommended that a stay order be issued. Yet the chief minister had gone ahead on his own "desire" to issue it, and ordered a revision.

► The PAC found that no government order was issued for the stay order. The chief minister orally instructed the chief secretary who issued a note to that effect. A government order requires cabinet approval but in this case even the minister of forests was not consulted for the stay before it was issued. Moreover the instructions were issued by the chief secretary without obtaining confirmation from the chief minister and only after the PAC wrote to Rao that he confirmed having issued such orders. The PAC has questioned whether the executive can contravene the provisions of law and usurp the powers of the legislature with an ordinary note. The PAC concludes that the stay was "irregular and illegal".

► Strangely enough, a crucial file No FFD 100 FDP 80 which was submitted by the forest secretary to the chief minister in May 1981, was reportedly missing when the PAC asked for it. The file is said to contain the circumstances under which the instructions for staying the rates were issued by the Government. Investigations reveal that this is a crucial file as it records the objections raised by the forest secretary against issuing stay orders and lowering the bank guarantee. If the file was present then the chief minister would have to explain why he issued a stay even though his officers advised him against it.

► The way in which the bank guarantee, which was originally decided to be the difference between the old rates and new, was arbitrarily fixed at Rs 5 lakh has also come under severe criticism from the PAC. The committee observed that concessions seemed to have been doled out to the industry without any valid written advice. It is learnt that the objections raised by the forest secretary in the missing file pertain to the guarantee. The chief minister was actually advised not to issue a stay order but was asked to tell the industries to go to court and get an order.

► When Harihar Polyfibres filed a writ petition on March 9, 1981, the High Court passed an interim order on November 26, 1981, that eucalyptus should be supplied up to May 1982, at Rs 120 a tonne till the petition was disposed of. The Government had recommended the figures but later on a forest official told the PAC that the cost per tonne at that time was Rs 265. As a result, Harihar Polyfibres was able to conserve Rs 1.56 crore last year because of the difference.

There is still more besides. After an inexplicable delay of six months the Government constituted a high-level committee in

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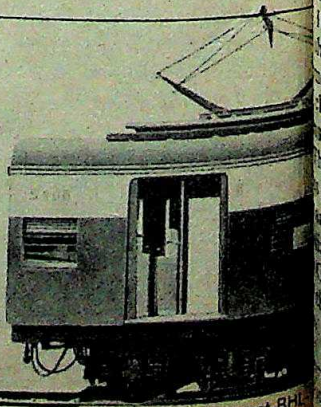
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er 1981 to go into the question of the rates of forest produce. The mber committee, chaired by the retary, consisted of the advocate- the chief conservator of forests and the secretaries of forests, com- d industry, law and parliamentary d finance. Said a member: "It was fictional committee. It was formed here would be no embarrassment to en the new rates were decided. If a arose he could blame the ee."

committee was asked to submit its ithin a fortnight of its formation but ous reasons" its term was extended efore it finally submitted its report 20, 1982. A committee member gly said: "The delay was mainly we decided that the chief minister pprove the rates before we make our ndations." The revised rates sug- drastic reduction: eucalyptus was down from Rs 810 to Rs 205; from Rs 180 to Rs 120 and sof- om Rs 900 to Rs 470. Even then the is complaining and Feroz Asghar dent, South Indian Plywood Indus- l: "The new rates would result e units being closed by next year." lowering the rate the Government a total of Rs 12 crore. Harihar s itself will save a total of Rs 3.79 lifts the 67,000 tonnes of eucalyptus onsumed last year. The two paper s, West Coast and Mysore Paper save Rs 76 lakh because of the in bamboo prices. The plywood which used 1.16 lakh cubic metres will save a total of Rs 4.64 crore. rates have prospective effect as it ed that the amendment could not ospective effect.

Law Department is now trying to a new rule so that it can be ted. If it is unable to clear this legal e total loss to the Government for ear-and-five-month period during e rates were stayed would be Rs 22 it is the old rate) and at least Rs 5 er the new rate.

PAC found that the considerable aking a final decision on the rates ormal and totally without justifi- It concluded: "This is a clear case of own" to the industries. But the ent is adamant and S. Shyam hief conservator of forests (general) : "There has been no hanky- he old rates were unrealistic but the are fair. We arrived at these rates ny pressure. There's been too much nging." But it remains to be seen Gundu Rao will be able to wipe the his affair off his hands.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA

BHEL

Power Problems

EVER since Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) set up its prestigious Research and Development (R & D) Division in August 1978, the corporation has been getting more and more schizophrenic about its role as India's largest repository of power technology. At the root of this has been a struggle between BHEL's myopic managers and its increasingly frustrated scientists. The estrangement peaked last month when the recently-created Energy Systems Group (ESG) was moved from BHEL's sprawling Vikasnagar campus in Hyderabad to dowdy rented quarters elsewhere in the city.

That was not the only insult for BHEL's scientists. In a shoddy move, Dr A. Gopalakrishnan, general manager of the R & D division, was demoted to head only the ESG and asked to report to the executive director, Tiruchi. Gopalakrishnan, 45, a brilliant nuclear scientist, had been lured from a plum job in the US in early 1976 and asked to head the Energy System and New Products (ESNP) Division in Delhi. Two years later the ENSP unit was moved to Hyderabad and merged with the then nascent R & D wing, and Gopalakrishnan was put in charge.





Gopalakrishnan (left) and Balakrishnan

Increasing Conflict: For a while, the centralised R & D division did extremely good work. But Gopalakrishnan and his fellow scientists began to encounter increasing conflict with T.V. Balakrishnan, director R & D. The recent moves are therefore seen as a victory for Balakrishnan. But BHEL managers are anxious to point out that the ESG's shifting was necessitated by the need for more interaction with the Regional Research Laboratories at Moula Ali, which is a long way from Vikasnagar, and with the Department of Science and Technology. Says Balakrishnan: "The employees would have faced difficulties constantly commuting to and from the complex to the city." He admits however: "It was probably a mistake to have shifted R & D from Delhi in the first place."

Balakrishnan denies that the move implies a demotion for Gopalakrishnan, saying that ESG, which deals with thermal and nuclear systems, handles the most crucial part of the corporation's research effort. He says that the ESG will also be involved in a coal gasification project funded by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. He admits, however, that the unit may probably have to shift to Tiruchi eventually in order to coordinate better with the nuclear engineering group there. There is reportedly stiff resistance being put up by the R & D employees to this plan.

Whatever the truth may be, it is clear that Balakrishnan and Gopalakrishnan have been at loggerheads ever since BHEL signed an agreement with Kraftwerke Union (KWU), a subsidiary of the Siemens group of West Germany, in 1980. Gopalakrishnan at that time was arguing for selective rather than blanket foreign collaboration so as to encourage indigenisation. He felt that Balakrishnan had not represented the researchers' viewpoint with the management.

Problems quickly cropped up. Gopalakrishnan and his team had developed an indigenous power surface condenser and even sold one to the 210 MW Raichur Thermal Power Station. KWU, however, insisted that it could not give guarantees for its steam turbines unless its own condenser technology was also used. The scientists lost that round. Later, KWU argued that its turbine technology could not be used unless BHEL agreed to the KWU/Siemens turbine control system package. Here, too, BHEL's Dynamics and Control group had already developed indigenous capability for control systems manufacture by the Control Equipment Division in Bangalore. Once again, KWU won out, and Gopalakrishnan had to give in.

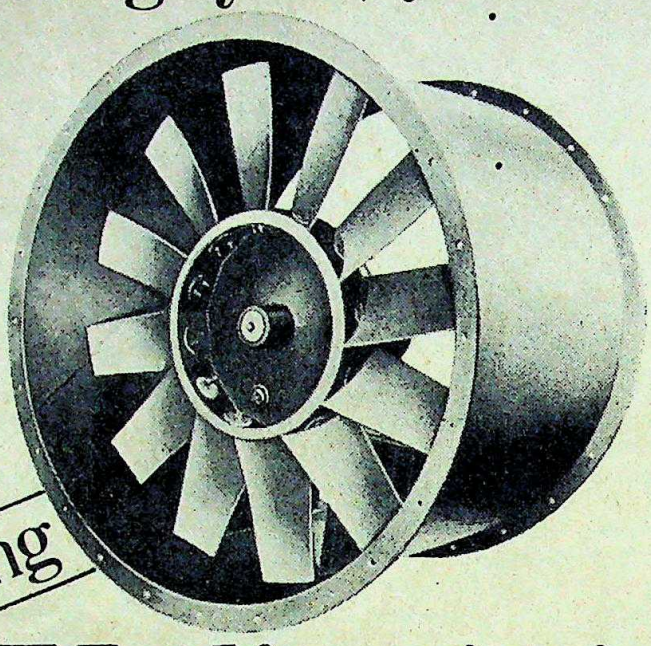
Demoralisation: Essentially, BHEL's scientists have been fired by a strong urge to delink the corporation from all foreign technological tie-ups. In recent months, BHEL has also lost out on quite a few prime thermal power projects with the country. It lost the Ramagundam project to Ansaldo of Italy in an international competition. Then, the Government, on the plea of project finance, awarded Anpara 'B' to Japan's Mitsui, the Rihand project in Uttar Pradesh to a British consortium, and the Waidhan project in Madhya Pradesh to the Russians. Now, the Maharashtra Government is trying to award the Chadrapur project to the Swiss Brown Boveri group. All these setbacks have led to considerable demoralisation.

Gopalakrishnan also reportedly attracted corporate ire when he set up a multidisciplinary Failure Analysis Group (FAG) within the R & D division in 1978. The FAG

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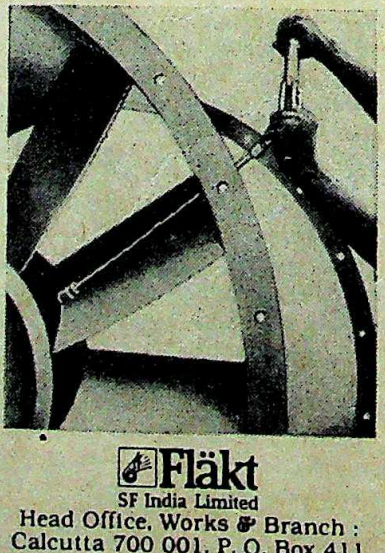
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ed several recurring problems in pment, and shortcomings in BHEL anufacture, erection and equip- missioning. None of this endeared chers to the management.

earch and Development employees that more than Rs 25 crore has sted in equipment and facilities for gious division, and that it will be penditure. The employees' organi- nd unions have also been drawn conflict. The R & D Executives on has written to BHEL's Chairman aging Director K.L. Puri saying that: "Vital analytical groups requiring laboratory back-up studies and laboratories needing analytical backing are separated from each other. No technically viable justification has been given by the management for these changes."

The employees have also demanded a probe by an external expert committee into the need for the split. N.V. Bhaskar Rao, president of the R & D Employees Union, says bluntly: "It is a somersault by the management."

But Puri is not willing to concede that argument. Says he: "What is wrong with shifting Gopalakrishnan from one prestigious post to another? We all know he is brilliant. Can't I move my sofaset from one corner of my room to another?" Although being likened to a piece of furniture is not exactly a compliment, Gopalakrishnan has not been daunted. Says he gamely: "I will continue with my research work whatever be the regrouping." Nevertheless, it looks as if BHEL is going to be involved in the wrong kind of power struggle in the months ahead.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG with AMARNATH K. MENON

BAY

w Network

WAS a choice few television addicts the city would refuse. At the flick of channel selection switch, residents mbay's congested Cuffe Parade area offered a tantalising alternative to routinely dull Doordarshan pro- mes: Marathi news and the endless shows could be dropped effortlessly t American TV serials like *Magnum, ie's Angel* or *Sesame Street*; the and dance sequences of *Chhaya Geet* way to the notorious Texan oil- naire J.R. Ewing, the villainous hero e American TV smash hit *Dallas;* Sunday's ritual Hindi film was re- d by international block-busters like corn I and *Star Trek*.

Starting last month, television buffs e crowded high-rise development were queuing up to subscribe to the -fed broadcasts from a newly- hed company called Nemula Video ork, a closed circuit networks sys- operated from an apartment in r Towers. A flat payment of Rs bought the subscriber a cable con- on to the tiny "broadcasting sta- and monthly rentals of Rs 200 paid ree hours of nightly viewing. The ge included one feature film and at two television serials or pro- mes. By mid-July, numerous ision-owners in at least seven Cuffe e buildings were linked up to one of stems of Network, and negotiations residents of another 13 buildings d completion.

Network's concept is surprisingly e. The "broadcasting station" is in little more than a small apartment houses a video cassette recorder a few television sets to test the and signal boosters to amplify the ical impulses which carry the image scriber sets. All the sets in a given building are linked to a common community antenna capable of receiving normal Doordarshan air waves, and the antenna in turn is tied up with the VCR in Network's station. Thus the cable station is little more than a community video viewing outfit—instead of a single viewing set being linked to the VCR, a theoretically infinite number can, with appropriate signal boosting, receive images from the same set. Explained a Network executive: "This is nothing more than the normal cable connecting your VCR to the TV set. But instead of one cable you have many cables and the same VCR can feed any number of sets."



Network's control room: imported fare

Extended Operations: Network is an offshoot of the well-established visual publicity firm, Western Outdoors. In the past few years Western Outdoors has been instrumental in rigging up closed circuit television viewing systems in at least six horse racing courses nationwide. In various hospitals and hotels, the company has set up closed circuit video viewing facilities very similar to Network's, used in residential flats in Bombay.

Cuffe Parade, a densely populated area of high income-earners, was a logical starting point—of the roughly 2,200 flats in the high-rise concentration, upwards of 80 per cent are estimated to be television set owners, and Network executives estimate that up to 90 per cent of these could be eventual buyers of their services.

To avoid problems with the authorities, Network has stuck to the closed circuit transmission system which was already accepted in hotels and hospitals. Transmission is entirely by cable, so no wireless or telecommunication laws are infringed and the cables pass through only private property, so Posts and Telegraphs laws are not violated. From the original Maker Towers nucleus, cables are passed with the written consent of residential cooperative societies, through private parking lots and walls to neighbouring buildings, thus keeping completely clear of public property like roads or vacant lots.

Law Suits: Twenty days after it first started, Network was already embroiled in fighting law suits. Arguing that the commercial exhibition of his *Seeta Aur Geeta* by them constituted breach of copyright, film producer G.P. Sippy, last fortnight, sued the Network for damages. With hearing scheduled in the near future, the law suit has become a test case for the film industry, which is united in its efforts to halt the dilution of its revenue. Video recording companies like Esquire, in fact, explicitly ban the use of prerecorded video cassettes for anything except personal consumption, and commercial use is deemed to be a breach of copyright.

Despite the controversy, however, the queue for Nemula Video Network's services was at the end of the fortnight growing even larger, with buildings outside the Cuffe Parade area sending the company requests for installation of a transmission unit. Possibly worried about the outcome of the law suit, Network executives had already planned to delete Hindi films from their repertoire. "The demand is for English films and serials anyway," said one, "so we'll stop Hindi films and carry on with the rest."

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

Statement by Shri J.N. BISWAS, Chairman United Industrial Bank Limited at the Forty Second Annual General Meeting of the Bank held in Calcutta on June 29, 1982.

Friends,

With great pleasure, I welcome you all to the 42nd Annual General Meeting of your Bank. I take it that all of you must have received a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 1981 and with your permission I shall consider the same as read.

The Directors' Report has already given you the salient features of the progress made by your Bank during the year. I shall not dwell further on the same, except perhaps to touch a few important developments in passing.

During the last year, the deposits of your Bank have crossed Rs 100 crores, which is a land-mark in the history of the Bank. The deposit growth rate of 20.6% achieved by the Bank may be considered satisfactory, in the light of the rather sluggish growth of deposits in the banking sector as a whole. However, the problem of sluggish growth rate of deposits in the banking industry brings out a disquieting feature. This refers to the new trend of making deposit schemes of public and private corporations, as also the various savings schemes of Government, more attractive compared to that of bank deposits both with regard to return on investment as well as tax relief. It may, therefore, be considered whether bank deposits could be made equally attractive by granting similar tax concessions as applicable to National Savings Certificates, Units of the UTI etc.

It may also be considered whether interest rate on bank deposits could be upgraded on similar lines as in the case of deposits with public and private corporations. This would increase deposits and bring about greater involvement of all the banks in the private sector. All this would go a long way in fulfilling the social obligations.

Further, as a consequence of successive increases in the statutory cash reserve ratios, many banks were in difficulty to maintain the same last year. In fact, almost the whole of the net accretional deposits of the banking system during 1981 was blocked for the purpose of meeting the revised ratios. Some rethinking in this area is considered necessary to enhance lendable resources with the Bank.

You will appreciate that, under the circumstances, the performance of our Bank in increasing our lending to the priority sectors was satisfactory. In fact our advances to priority sectors at the end of the year were more than 25% of our total advances. We have also been making advances under the 20 Point Programme and although our contributions are as yet small, a beginning has been made in the matter. The growth in traditional advances has, however, been restricted as far as possible due to the above reasons.

Although our Bank had achieved a steady growth in branch expansion during the last few years, we treated 1981 as a year of consolidation and expanded in a restrictive way only in the rural areas in the districts of West Bengal.

In order to cope with the increased volume of work as also the growing network of branches, we have tried to delegate more powers to the Regional Managers for controlling the branches in their respective Regions. The creation of an additional ti between the Head Office and the branches has started yieldi the desired result. At the same time, we have tried to put ev more emphasis to train up our staff in order to serve t customers better. In addition to the in-company courses for o officers conducted by the Bankers' Training College (Reser Bank of India) Bombay, we have sent several officers to vario other specialised institutions like the Administrative St College, College of Agricultural Banking, Indian Institute Management etc. The Bank's own training college in Calcu has also been revitalised and is conducting training programm for award staff and officers continuously. As a result of th more than 150 officers and staff have undergone various traini programmes.

It has been observed that more and more demands ha been made on the banking system to cater to the needs socially preferred sectors. It has, therefore, become necessary feed the system with such discretionary refinance facilities would enable it to obtain adequate deposits and to utilise th according to the scale of social preferences. It is suggested release the impounded 10% of the incremental depos presently held by the Reserve Bank of India, and, if possible, provide some relaxations with regard to Cash Reserve Ra (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR). It is hearten to note that recently Government of India has already initia some steps in the direction of selective liberalisation of cre The CRR has been adjusted in a downward direction. welcome relaxations in this regard.

In our last report we stressed the necessity of introduc some specific concessions. In this regard it was emphasised to motivate smaller banks to involve in Priority Sector creasingly a part of such investment by such banks may considered as investment for SLR. Similarly, to enable s banks to have less strain on its resources due to sudden spu sick units, facility to get refinance from IRCI or like Institut may be considered. If the refinancing agencies could make s refinance available to the banks at a concessional rate of inte in respect of outstanding advances to sick units, then the ba with the newly released funds, will be in a better position to m the social obligations.

Though 1981 has been a difficult year, yet I c successfully steer along the right path mainly due to the sup and co-operation I received from all members of the staff. I w to place on record my thanks to the staff, the numer depositors, the constituents, the Reserve Bank of India, Central and the State Governments, the members of the Bo and also to you, the shareholders, for the whole-hea co-operation and unstinted support extended to me.

Thank you once again.

Note: This does not purport to be the proceedings of the Ann General Meeting.

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OIL IMPORT

Quid Pro 'Kuo'?

OLD GHOSTS very often refuse to be exorcised in spite of the best efforts of witch doctors. Last fortnight, a particularly persistent specimen flew out of the woodwork to haunt the top echelons of the Congress(I) as the press and Parliament joined hands to raise a stink about a controversial diesel oil deal struck in February 1980 and the disappearance of the relevant file almost two years ago.

'The Case of the Missing File', the latest political whodunit from the prolific pen of crusader-journalist Arun Shourie, was published in the *Indian Express* of July 10, a few days after the draft was circulated to about 50 selected parliamentarians. Some MP's promptly introduced breach of privilege motions against Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Petroleum Minister Shiv Shankar and concerned officials apart from Shourie himself.

Calling Attention: Parliamentary dust was kicked up particularly because in notes to the chairman of the Rajya Sabha and the speaker of the Lok Sabha, Shourie had argued that "vital documents" needed by the Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) to examine the diesel oil import deal "were deliberately and successfully kept from it". He went on to urge that the COPU "having been thwarted, the Parliament itself... now examine the transaction and its cover-up".

Strong words, perhaps for anybody else; but coming from Shourie's normally acerbic pen they struck a familiar note. For the story he told had all the ingredients of mischief in high places, political manipulation and shady transactions. It was not the first time that the centre-piece of the story—a deal by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to buy 5 lakh tonnes of high speed diesel oil (HSD) from Kuo Oil Ltd of Hong Kong—was the subject of a controversy. The shipment, which resulted in Rs 9 crore loss to the exchequer, was spotlighted in the press from time to time in 1981 and COPU—the same committee from which vital documents had been withheld—had passed adverse remarks on it in its 47th report presented to Parliament on April 30 this year.

But that little nugget of information led Shourie to a veritable gold-mine. In a scathing 7,000-word exposé, he sketched out the vast dimensions and compelling questions posed by an episode which, if it cannot be explained as a series of misjudgements and unfortunate coincidences, could well be a fraud of colossal dimensions.

Tenders Invited: The story told by Shourie poured inflammable oil on troubled waters (*see chart, pages 54, 55*). In January 1980, a few days after Mrs Gandhi's Congress(I) juggernaut, driven by Sanjay Gandhi and his boisterous, impatient and aggressive lieutenants, rode back to power, the IOC floated a tender, No 1/80, for the import of 500,000 tonnes of HSD and 300,000 tonnes of superior kerosene oil. The large volumes were unusual, but hardly surprising. The country was in the grip of a harvest failure after the bad 1979 monsoon, and the demand for energy was rising fast.

The kerosene tender was routinely handled. The HSD tender took an entirely different course. Oil products are normally bought by a special group of officials and experts from IOC and Ministries such as Petroleum and Finance, who make up an Empowered Committee sanctioned by no less than the Cabinet. This committee was set up during the Janata period when India's petroleum purchases on the open market (as opposed to government-to-government sales) began to go up. The idea, as one official said, was "to keep politics out of it". Tenders were received confidentially on telex (the system was changed to sealed covers later) for scrutiny by the committee, which made up its mind independently and told IOC which orders to place. Once issued, tender conditions weren't changed, negotiations weren't permitted nor were prices allowed to be varied.

As important was the fact that India, in keeping with the global practice, placed its long-term contracts on a "variable price" basis, that is, it would pay for the products it ordered not at a "fixed price" determined in advance but at a price which bore a preformulated relation to the prices prevailing in one of the four important petroleum markets (Singapore, Rotterdam, the Gulf or Mediterranean ports) at the time of shipment. In the hundreds of deals struck by IOC, this practice had been abandoned just six times between September 1976 and September 1979, but for much smaller amounts of naphtha, fuel oil and kerosene.

Unprecedented: Petroleum Minister P.C. Sethi thumbed his nose at each of these established procedures. First, he extended the validity of the tender from February 15 to 22, then changed its conditions unilaterally, asking for oil tenders to be quoted on a fixed price basis, and finally ordered elimination of those who would concur—a step which left just two of original 14 interested parties in the Ignoring the Empowered Committee a ether, further ignoring the protests and vice of IOC and Petroleum Ministry offic Sethi went on to issue a written directing the placement of contracts wit lowest tenderers.

The net effect of all this manoeu was to land India's largest single oil con order with a private party in the lap of Oil Ltd of Hong Kong, represented in by the Delhi-based Hindustan Monar Ltd. Again, against all normal practice suppliers were also permitted to reduce price marginally on the last day o submission of the tender. A trivial amou 30,000 tonnes was also ordered from sm London-based company which had made a fixed price offer.

"I admit my responsibility," Sethi INDIA TODAY when asked about the cha a fixed price contract. "I was of the op that OPEC prices would go up." As Sh demonstrates, Sethi was in a splendi nority of one if he really held this opi Summing up the expert view at the tim

The deal resulted in a Rs

then petroleum secretary B.B. Vohra tested against Sethi's actions, arguin prices were expected to fall in the c months. He wrote unambiguously th the present situation, a fixed price for a term delivery does not appear to be interest". Spot prices were showing a trend everywhere. At Rotterdam, dies ces fell from $375 a tonne in early Janu $300 at the end of the month and were range of $310 on February 22 wh contract was signed. At Singapore, a spot prices fell from close to $390 at t of December 1979 to $348 at the January 1980 and had declined to $3 days before the contract was signed.

Diesel prices did actually rise for weeks thereafter. In Rotterdam they w to $371 on April 25. But the de trend proved to be a disaster for In prices came tumbling down thereafter COPU's 47th report: "It is clear th subsequent events proved that it w prudent to have gone in for the pur The Committee fail to understand w normal procedure of processing th chase proposals through the Emp Committee was not followed in this And it concluded, the committee await a further inquiry for an explana this regard".

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Rs loss to the exchequer

rding to calculations done by IOC, ry bought a total of 512,155 tonnes from Kuo Oil for a total payment of illion. It would have paid almost on less had the same contract been le price terms.

THIS might have been so much esel through the pipeline, attributble perhaps to Sethi's innocence of s in the world's petroleum market untypical disregard for established es, were it not for a curious subevelopment: The disappearance of Oil case file No. P-20. Ordinarily had no reason to exist. Since oil ns are handled by the Empowered e, the Petroleum Ministry keeps oncerning individual purchases; it eps track of the decisions of the ed Committee.

so in this case. With Sethi showing interest in the purchase and chartrse from the start, the ministry case file which came to contain the exchanges between the minisis officials, and finally the orders the contract. It was certainly not the Government could afford to be bout the place without somebody careful watch on it.

hat is precisely what happened to he last mention of P-20's existence ecords of the petroleum secretary pril 18, 1980 sent it to his minister, Patil, who had replaced Sethi on Thereafter, for all practical pur- ceased to exist. And things would ined that way had it not been for nment's auditors who, in the cou- ne inquiries, found they could not their study of India's petroleum in the absence of this one file. nocent inquiry from the auditors ber 6, 1980 sent the top officials of um Ministry into a flap. Frantic ls; numerous letters exchanged; and down the line; personal visits sts: all produced nothing but a silence. It was dogged persistence ole year that yielded key facts: e concerned had been sent to the ster's house—not office—in 1980; handed over personally by Patil's retary, K.C. Chennaveerappa, to dhi's Special Assistant, R.K.

cord of its despatch or arrival had in the offices concerned.

ply: INDIA TODAY has learnt that the file contains a note addressed by Patil to the prime minister seeking her guidance on the vexed question of variable versus fixed prices which had caused so much disagreement between the officials and their minister two months earlier. But if Patil was serious about getting guidance, he certainly didn't show it: he made no attempt to press for a reply, showed no interest in getting the file back, and apparently wiped the entire episode from his mind. The prime minister, needless to say, volunteered no advice, and no reply ever came back to the ministry.

COPU was understandably upset when Petroleum Ministry officials failed to deliver the file to them in March and April this year. After all, they could hardly fail to recognise the eccentricities in P-20's movements. A file going to the prime minister for policy advice would be recorded in the relevant diaries; it would not be handed personally by a private secretary to a special assistant; it would go to the prime minister's principal secretary who is effectively the second senior-most civil servant in the country. And it certainly would not go missing for two years.

What COPU didn't know, of course, was that high-level efforts were being made to extricate the file from whichever morgue it had been consigned to. Top officials in various ministries and secretaries had conferred. One minister after another assured the officials that the file was on its way and would just be reaching the Petroleum Ministry. Time was running out. COPU's term would end on April 30 and there was little likelihood that another committee would examine the same deal. The stalling went on till it became clear that if the file didn't appear the episode would break out into the open. On April 5, out of the blue, P-20 suddenly reappeared—a not very bulky buff-coloured file with nothing to distinguish it from the millions of others that adorn government cupboards.

"The file was misplaced," said Sethi blandly. Perhaps. But it was only after the information contained in the file was handed over to them that COPU was able to write the key paragraphs in its report on the Kuo Oil transaction. COPU realised that two weeks before the Kuo Oil transaction at a fixed price of $352.65 per tonne of HSD, IOC bought diesel from the Kuwait National Petroleum Company on a variable price basis at $336.73 and one week later from the Soviet Union on the same basis at $325.46.

Posers: In the ultimate analysis, Shourie's account raises questions which demand answers urgently. Astonishingly enough, while the indictment of the deal figures prominently in COPU's 47th report, there is no mention of the missing file. There is also no explanation of the role of COPU's Chairman, Congress(I) MP Bansi Lal, who in the committee's last meeting determined that the episode was too trivial to be reported.

Yet, the same Lal sat silently through the sessions during which Janata Party MP R.R. Murarka of the Rajya Sabha (who has since retired) grilled officials and extracted from them the grim details of their unsuccessful efforts to get the file, and thus allowed the whole episode to go into Parliament's records. Which makes it all the more surprising why, with such potentially explosive information in their possession, COPU's 22 members, who include a fair sprinkling of opposition MP's, let pass an opportunity to investigate an incident with such obvious ramifications.

Equally mystifying is how Hindustan Monark Pvt Ltd (HMPL), a New Delhi-based manufacturing and trading company with absolutely no previous experience in handling petroleum, came to get a slice of the country's largest privately handled petroleum deal. HMPL was registered in October 1967 with an authorised capital of Rs 20 lakh by three brothers, Amar Chand Jain, Sulekh Chand Jain and Harish Chand Jain along with other shareholders.

The company has two factories, one each in Ghaziabad and Hyderabad, where it makes light defence ancillaries for the army and bicycle parts for export. Its list of objectives includes dealing in "all kinds of agency trading business". So it was that in the early part of 1980 the company was looking into the possibility of expanding its range of activity to take in such items as sugar and cement—both of which India trades in large volumes—and petroleum products.

Favoured Few: Neither HMPL's unfamiliarity with petroleum nor the fact that it made its first contact with Kuo Oil only a matter of days before the HSD tender, ultimately stood in the way of its making a strikingly successful deal. Kuo Oil representatives spent some weeks in India where they were shepherded by Harish Jain, the youngest of the three brothers. To the extent that such contacts can help, the youngest Jain certainly had some in the right places.

He joined the Doon School in Dehra Dun in 1958, the same year as Sanjay Gandhi and his closest political crony, Kamal Nath, the MP from Chhindwara. Sanjay Gandhi dropped out in less than three years but Jain and Nath completed their school careers in Dehra Dun in 1963 and 1964 respectively. Good friends in school, they remained close afterwards, Nath rising fast during the Emergency to become Sanjay's right-hand

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man, Jain becoming a successful businessman. Small wonder that A.G. Kulkarni, MP, should have alleged in the Rajya Sabha that Nath played an intermediary role in the HSD contract having attended a meeting at which the tender was discussed with officials. Sethi smilingly denied that Nath was ever present at any such meeting, but admitted that he had met Jain through Nath.

Whatever the relevance of that, Sethi's fixed price deal and the mysterious journ of the file which began when Sanjay's imp on politics was indelible, have opene Pandora's box. COPU has asked for a furt inquiry. Several MP's are determined no

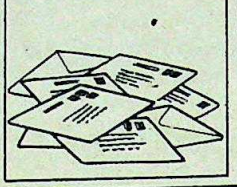
The Defiling of P-20

START HERE



JANUARY 6, 1980

Mrs Gandhi triumphantly returns to power.



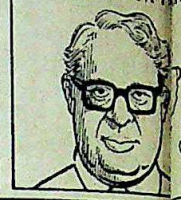
JANUARY 8, 1980

Tender No 1/80 is floated for 5 lakh tonnes of high speed diesel oil (HSD). The tender is valid from February 5 to 15. Of the 14 offers received, 10 offer supplies on variable prices, four on fixed prices.



FEBRUARY 15, 1980

The Petroleum Minister P.C. Sethi amends the terms, asking only for fixed price offers, instructing the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to reject tenders that do not conform, and extends validity of the tender by one week.



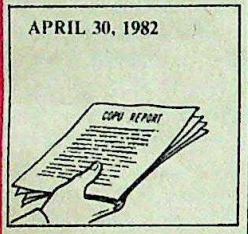
FEBRUARY 17, 1980

The Petroleum Secretary B.B. V argues against th decision of the minister, writing note which says throughout the w oil products are on variable price Since prices are expected to fall coming months t country will incu loss. He suggest in the present si a fixed price for long-term delive does not appear in our interest.



JULY 10, 1982

Arun Shourie publishes his exhaustive article "The Case Of The Missing File."



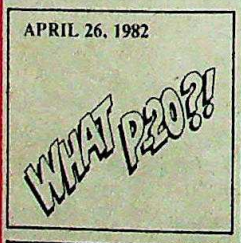
APRIL 30, 1982

COPU's term lapses and its report is submitted to the Parliament without any reference to the saga of the missing file. But the report does criticise the Kuo Oil purchase. It states: "It is clear that the subsequent events proved that it was not prudent to have gone in for the purchase."



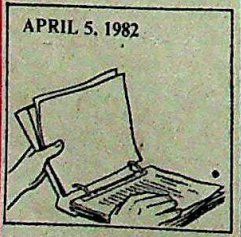
APRIL 28, 1982

COPU meets again. Chairman Bansi Lal of the Congress(I) says the file episode is too small a matter to mention in the report. He leaves the meetings pleading that he is unwell.



APRIL 26, 1982

COPU meets to discuss the draft of its report. Many members are astonished to find that there is no mention of the long episode of the missing file.



APRIL 5, 1982

The file abruptly returns from the PM's house and the ministry telephones COPU to say that the requested information is being prepared.

On the basis of high-level assurances that the file is being sent back, the Petroleum Ministry writes to COPU promising the relevant facts by March 31. The file does not materialise and no facts are summoned.

COPU asks the Petroleum Secretary Lavraj Kumar to explain the Kuo Oil contract and gives him one week to ascertain the fact. The Petroleum Ministry gets frantic. Sethi, Patil and Shiv Shankar are pressed to get the file back.

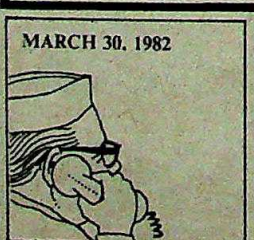
The director, department of petroleum, records a note that in spite of his best efforts, he can get neither the file nor a reply from the concerned official.

The Parliament' Committee on P Undertakings (C which is investig the import of cr and petroleum products, meets chairman of IOC demands reason fixed price transactions wit Oil Ltd. He rep "You can ask t Government ab this. We got a directive asking accept the offer Officials tell C that the transa resulted in a "notional" loss US $9.854 mill

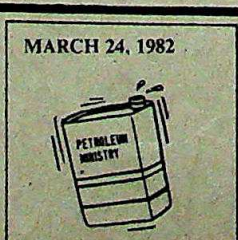


APRIL 2, 1982

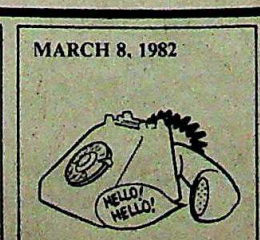
COPU summons the petroleum secretary and grills him. He admits that the file is untraceable after having been sent to the PM's house.



MARCH 30, 1982



MARCH 24, 1982



MARCH 8, 1982



FEBRUARY 20,

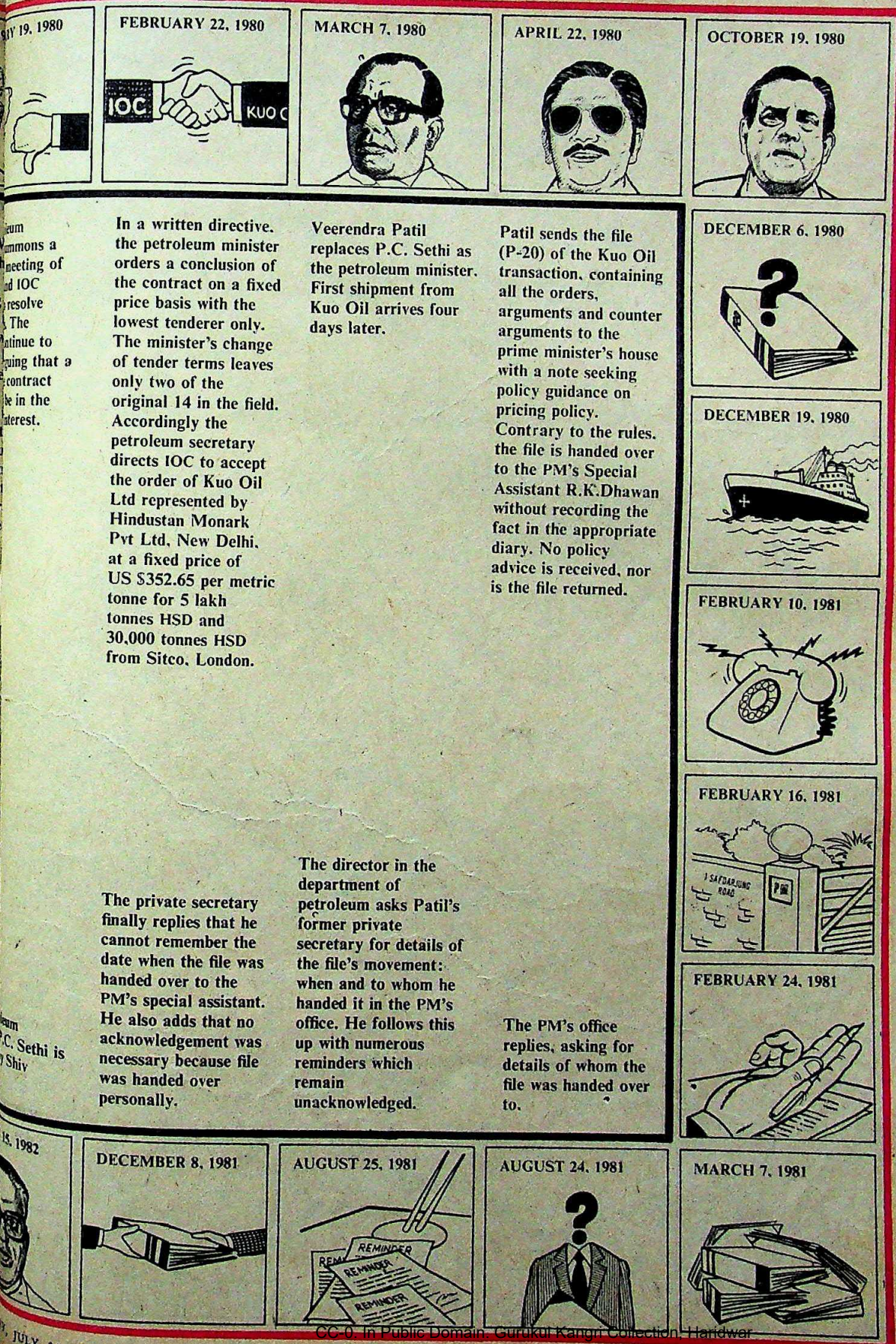
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the issue till they find out just how P- to be missing, and who was ible.

anwhile, the Government last year the practice of using Indian agents in any transactions handled by IOC or the Oil and Natural Gas Commission and is working actively to create sealed telex facilities, secure from industrial espionage, to deal with sellers abroad. None of this is firm guarantee against repeating mistakes like Tender 1/80; but the exposé might help teach the Government not to again be caught *in flagrante delicto*.

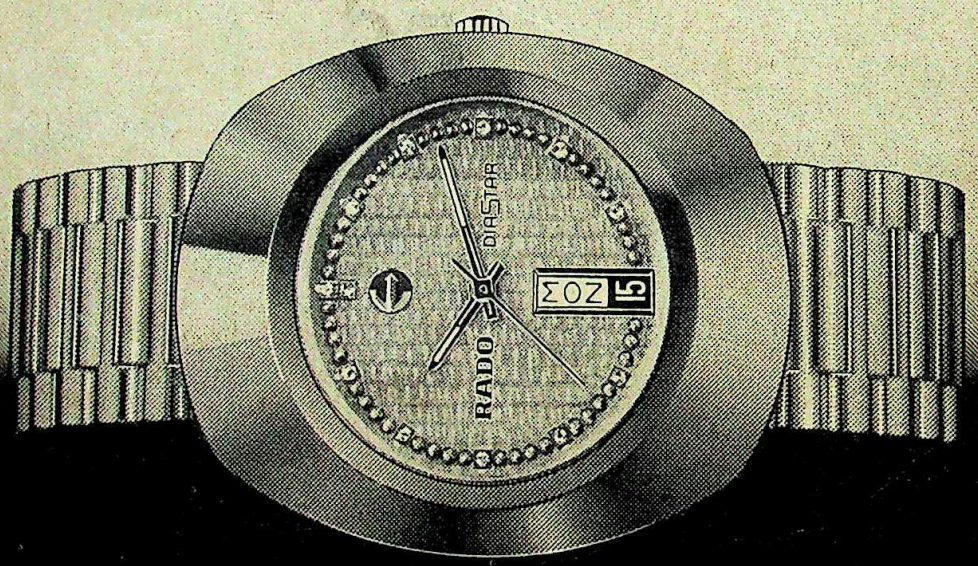
—SUMAN DUBEY



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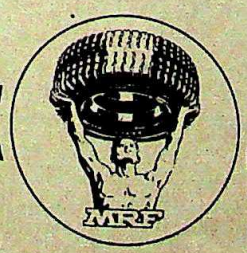
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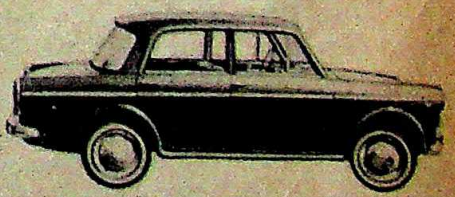


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SMUGGLING

The Royal Connection

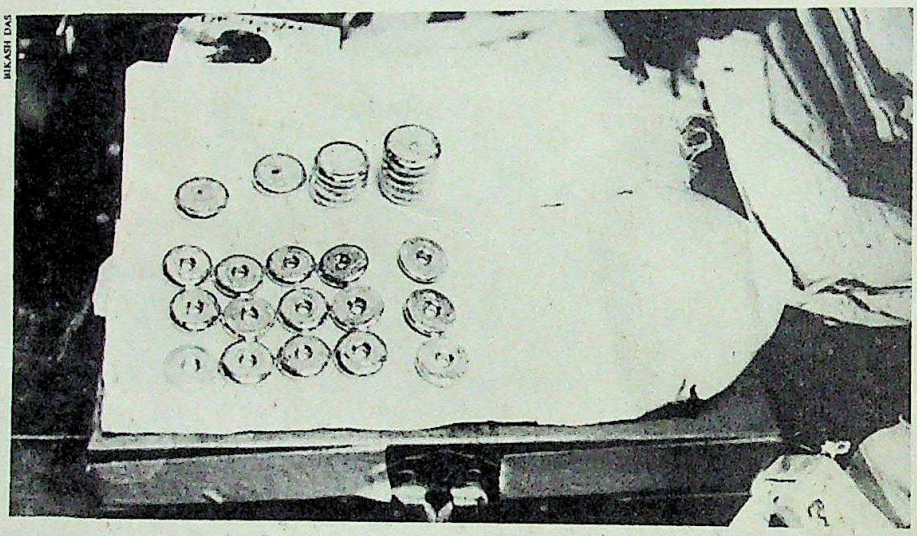
IT WAS the biggest haul ever in Asia last May when the Calcutta Customs seized 150 kg of smuggled gold valued at around Rs 3 crore from the airport. Normally that should have been enough for the customs to rest on their laurels, but for the fact that the seizure opened a trail to a business family whose operations are by all accounts comparable to those of Haji Mastan and Sukur Naran Bakhia.

With contacts in high places in Delhi, the Calcutta group may well escape the law though last fortnight customs officials were busy tightening the noose. One of them told INDIA TODAY: "Our evidence is foolproof and if there is no interference from the top then it should not be long before we are able to bust this racket."

Tackling the Calcutta syndicate, without the chance of interference from relevant political quarters, is not the only problem the seizure has thrown up. The gold was found in the possession of a member of the Bhutan royal family who, however, could not be touched as he, like many others from the Himalayan Kingdom, enjoys diplomatic immunity.

Royal Carrier: There is ample evidence that the man had been regularly bringing in gold to Calcutta from Hong Kong and Bangkok, acting always as a commission agent of the syndicate, and the Ministry of External Affairs has already taken up the issue with the Bhutanese Government who have been requested to hand him over to New Delhi. The Ministry is tight-lipped about the whole affair, obviously reluctant to ruffle good-neighbourly relations which may stand in the way of New Delhi pressing too hard.

The Bhutanese carrier's name is Rimpoche and his life story has a fairy-tale quality about it. Now aged around 40, Rimpoche was born as the crown prince of the fierce Khampa tribe of Tibet which in the late '50s had waged a bitter struggle against the Chinese. When he was four years old Rimpoche was sent to a monastery to undergo the rigorous training that is necessary to don the mantle of a Khampa king. There he stayed till he was in his mid-twenties when he met Ashi Cheoki, a Bhutanese princess, married and older than he. The two fell in love; Cheoki divorced her husband and married Rimpoche, who gave up the monastic life after undergoing the customary punishment of lashes. He then came over to Bhutan where today he wields considerable influence, not only because his wife is the aunt of the present king but also because she is a woman of vast property with considerable interests in dolomite mines.



BIKASH DAS

Confiscated gold: a question of values

Yet such is the insecurity in these still feudal kingdoms that all members of the royal family choose to stash away money in other places and Rimpoche obviously decided to do the same. While it is not known how the syndicate picked him up, it is obvious that they selected him to be their carrier as his diplomatic immunity would stand in the way of customs authorities going through his bags. Over the last two years Rimpoche made trips to Bangkok and Hong Kong regularly—often twice a month—and though customs had their suspicions there was not much they could do about it.

Definite Information: But their intelligence network did not sit idle. Last May, armed with definite information that Rimpoche was carrying gold, they asked him to open his bags as soon as he had landed from one such trip accompanied by his wife and others. A stunned Rimpoche at first refused but then had to comply and, according to officials who rummaged in his baggage, broke down and began to sing as his eight open suitcases revealed bars of gold stacked together. Rimpoche, however, could no arrested and he left for Thimpu a coupl days later.

While the family would not talk, pe who know them are all unanimous on point that its members are well connecte the corridors of power in New Delhi. that is what is giving the customs author sleepless nights as there is always the gr ing fear that their entire labour ma wasted. As one official said: "In the there have been instances of big fish ge away because of the clout they wield. very exasperating, and sometimes one al feels it would have been better to be o other side."

Meanwhile, toms authorities a struck gold in a f big way last fortn as eight young N lese were found c ing about 20 k gold when they a ted from an air from Bangkok. A ding to customs s ces here the men longed to the gang which had ceeded a few years in snatching some of its men from the authorit Tribhuvan Airpo Kathmandu after were held for sm ing in thousands of watches. This time had the gold wrapped in vaseline-co containers which they had kept hidde their bodies but were betrayed by the X machine. The group of eight regularly s tled between Calcutta and the Far East though customs officials had suspected long that they were engaged in smug they had been given a long rope.

But while it is easy to deal with com folk, what does the law do with dignit like Rimpoche who by virtue of their r connections enjoy far greater immunity ordinary diplomats? Rimpoche himself choose to lie low but there is no guara that the trade will not be continued by o enjoying the same privileges.

Already there are suspicions that of the art collection in the royal palac Thimpu and also art objects from India being spirited out and sold for fabu amounts abroad by men who feature Bhutan's list of dignitaries. But there is that the customs can do as it is not alw that they have definite information would justify their running the risk of ask these VVIPs to open their bags.

—SUMANTA

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Adroit 183

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Chairman: In his letter to shareholders.



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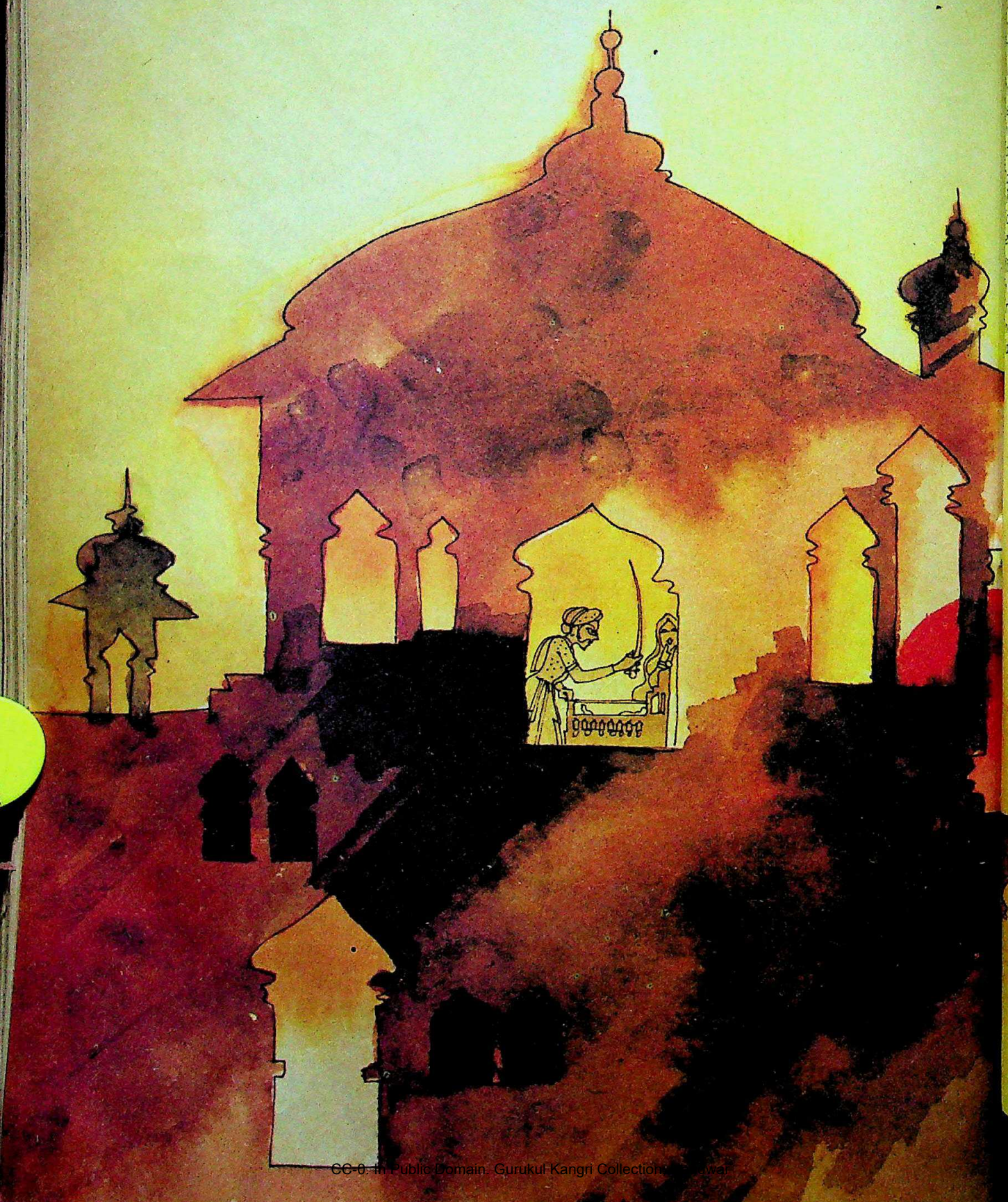
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n legends of valour and ivalry. Tales of romance and eachery. Piety and pride. The nd is soaked in legends that e on. And will. Till time des away.

dmini and her Chittor. undered and ravaged by laudin Khilji in an effort to win e queen. The renowned eauty who killed herself rather an tarnish the Rajput code of nduct.

nna Bai. The nursemaid ho saved the heir to the daipur throne by sacrificing r own son.

ra Bai, the queen who chose dedicate her life to Lord rishna, immune to the taunts d ridicule of the people of agaur.

Krishna, the princess of Udaipur who drank poison to save the kingdom from the wrath of two rival suitors.

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xing Time

WHY SHOULD a decade-old tax case in India, involving a trifling amount, get the *New York Times* into a state of high dudgeon? Because the case involves that other high priest of American journ- Time Incorporated, publishers of *fe* and *Fortune*.

tax cases go, this one is certainly d to raise eyebrows, for the bill on *Time*'s Delhi news bureau is n the argument that the company profit on the basis of the news in India, and that the Government refore tax this news gathering

idea certainly seems novel, and ficials have reacted with predictable ent. "It's a unique theory," Bob l of Time Incorporated's legal ent told INDIA TODAY in New York. public relations official Lou Sla- "No responsible western country o anything like this."

bed Editorial: The *New York Times*, tly responding to a sedate report on ject in the US magazine *Business* promptly climbed the high horse 'Indian cheek". An editorial on June forth a quiver of stinging barbs: s no denying the Indians' ingenuity. ing sticks, there's a whole new tax be conquered: new exit fees for all ned travellers, depending on the of Indian sun they have absorbed; every globe and map that profits owing the subcontinent's location; l royalties from an array of diaries els, starting of course with E.M. 's most profitable *A Passage to* The paper went on to suggest that venues slackened, Mrs Gandhi could a war on Pakistan and let tax s on war reportage pay for the cost ar.

t for the first time, this burst of tial outrage missed the substance of e. The Indian Government argues s gathering is an essential part of ness of publishing a magazine, since annot be a magazine without news, establishment of a news bureau in establishes a firm business connection. is the case, profits earned as a result business connection become taxable basis of the ratio between expenditure rofits. Contrary to the *New York* fanciful imagery, this argument be stretched to novelists, research scholars and so on because no business connection exists in such cases.

Finance Ministry officials stoutly deny that this argument is unique, and point to two international codes to buttress their viewpoint. One is the United Nations' model double taxation convention, which provides a draft that countries may wish to follow while working out bilateral agreements to avoid double taxation. A second similar convention has been put out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (membership of which is restricted to some of the developed free market economies). Both conventions, the officials point out, suggest specific clauses that would exempt foreign news bureaus from taxation.

Said one government official: "This proves that first, the idea of taxing foreign news bureaus is not something we have thought up. Others have realised that such bureaus can be taxed, and have suggested exemption. Second, in cases where we have double taxation agreements with other countries, we have generally provided for such tax exemption. But in the case of the US, we have no such agreement. So we cannot provide for exemption." Yet no other country has actually imposed such taxes.

Pleading Exemption: *Time*, meanwhile, has naturally contested the tax bill. It first appealed to the commissioner of income tax (appeals) and then to the income tax appellate tribunal—losing in both cases. *Time*'s lawyer in India, Nani Palkhivala, argued before the appellate tribunal that news gathering was only an incidental part of the business, and also that this activity was similar to an overseas company's local office which only buys goods for export. Such offices are exempt from tax, and Palkhivala argued that news bureaus are tax exempt.



Lawyer Palkhivala: claiming vendetta

The tribunal rejected both arguments, handing down the verdict that the magazine's Delhi bureau had a firm business connection with the magazine, and that exemption could not be claimed because the news was not "purchased" for export. *Time* has appealed against this to the High Court, where the matter now rests.

But Palkhivala's more interesting question during the tribunal hearing was why the Government had decided to tax only *Time*'s bureau, and not the BBC, Associated Press (AP), *Washington Post* and numerous other news bureaus operating out of Delhi. The implied question was obvious: Was it out of vendetta because *Time* had published something unpalatable to the Government? Significantly enough, *Time* first got a tax recovery notice in March 1976, at the height of the Emergency.

The Government apparently had no defence to offer before the tribunal on this count, or thought it did not need to. Last fortnight, however, Finance Ministry officials said that *Time* was not the only case, and that AP had paid tax on their operations in India, a fact which could not be independently confirmed. Other news bureaus too had been assessed for tax, but had not been presented with a tax demand because their organisations had showed losses. The officials also denied that the tax case against *Time* was started during the Emergency. "*Time* may have got the tax notice in 1976, but we started work on the case in 1973," one official claimed.

In Defence: Meanwhile, the Government in turn was questioning the bona fides of the news reports on a dispute now many years old, and linked this to Mrs Gandhi's forthcoming visit to the US. Said one indignant official: "Why should they suddenly rake up an old case just now and make a noise about it? Because they know this will embarrass Mrs Gandhi and she will ask the tax people to drop the case." On the other hand, the press interest now was linked to a fresh tax recovery notice served on *Time*'s Delhi bureau in May, which *Time* officials in New York said might lead to a closing down of the bureau altogether.

If the episode evokes memories of other controversial departures from India by Coca-Cola and IBM, the Government's main worry seemed to be its possible implications for Mrs Gandhi's visit to Washington. On the morning of the *New York Times*' outburst, the Indian Embassy in Washington telexed the entire editorial to the Foreign Office in New Delhi, which promptly asked the Finance Ministry for explanations. The diplomats, concerned essentially with ensuring an unruffled US trip for the prime minister, were pressing the ministry to drop the matter, since in any case the money involved was less than $10,000 per year (somewhat less than the sum required to fight a war with Pakistan, unless the *New York Times* has discovered new cost-effective methods). And while Finance Ministry officials insisted that no decision had been taken, there were indications that even if the High Court gave a verdict in the Government's favour, it might not press the tax demand. Considering the nature of news gathering operations that might be the sensible thing to do.

—T.N. NINAN with MADHU TREHAN in New York

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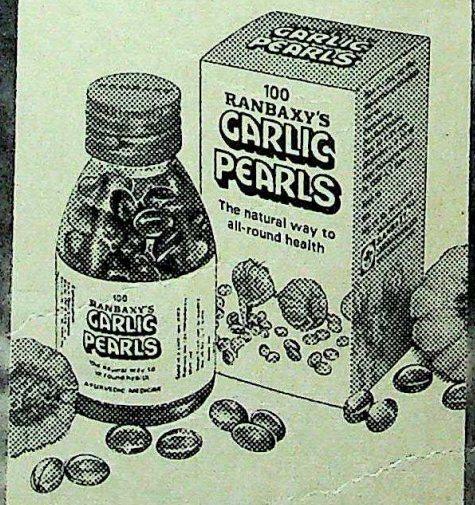


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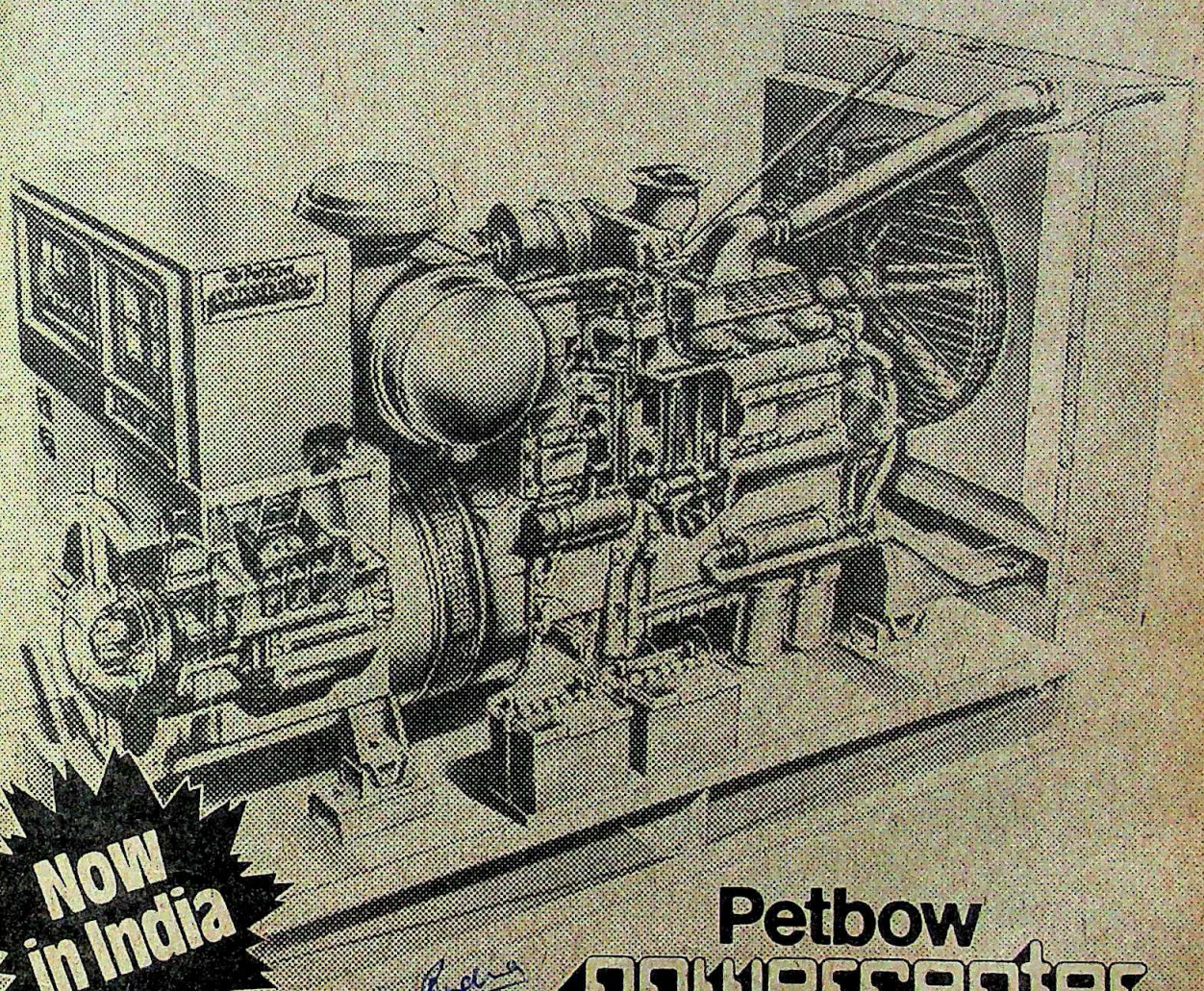
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ORISSA

The Slave Trade

FOUR years ago, Binayak Sahu, 14, was the one of the thousands of unemployed Oriya youth roaming aimlessly in search of a job in the interiors of the coastal district of Puri. Hope glimmered when he met a middle-aged man at a marketplace near his village Bidharpur who promised him a high-salary job in Iraq with free food and housing. There was, however, one condition: he would have to undergo three months of "free" labour somewhere near Delhi before he would be sent out. A desperate Sahu readily agreed. He is now 18 and a cripple. The three months stretched into four long years of torture and unpaid work during which his right leg was crushed. Back home, he has become a problem and burden for his old father, two brothers and three sisters. "It would have been better if I had died of starvation," says Sahu, tears rolling down his cheeks.







Doma Biswal, 55, of the same village, has a similar horror story to relate. He was approached by the agent of a contractor, Mangu Jena from Sanuhatuar. He was paid Rs 500 as advance for six months' work outside the state with a promise of Rs 150 a month as wage plus free food. Thrilled by the wad of currency notes in his hand, he rushed to his son and three starving daughters, handed them the money and went off with the agent. After four days' travel, he reached Badiah in Jammu along with a group of 20 others, who were later sent to a "concentration camp" where they slaved for 12 hours a day. Each of them were forced to dig 200 cubic feet of hilly earth a day to be entitled for wages and free food—a bowl of boiled rice and unripe fruits as vegetables. Anybody who fell ill or abstained from duty was made to pay a fine of Rs 10 and Rs 4 as food charges which would be deducted from his wages.

Wiser: Biswal could not take the hard work. He vomited blood and his limbs started swelling. He asked if he could go back with his dues but instead he was asked to pay fines and refund the Rs 500 advance. Last month, he along with two others decided to escape. They managed to board a bus, reached Kathua railway station and fled in a train without tickets, poorer but wiser. Biswal who says he is now feeling "better and free" still fears that the contractor and his agent will return and torture him to refund the money.

Biswal and Sahu are only individual cases. Last month, when gruesome accounts of deaths and torture of dadan workers started trickling into the state once again, Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik was prompted





Sahu and Biswal (top left and centre) with other victims of the trade: horror stories

to announce that his Government would soon establish a corporation for the deployment of labour in and outside the country. An official team also visited some West Asian countries to look into the plight of Oriya workers there and prepared a report on the situation. A committee has also been set up in the Assembly to look into the complaints of dadan workers. Three mor ago contractors' agents descended on a n descript Gaur-Patna village and hired women and children to carry wood chip neighbouring Brahampur. They were p some advance money and then taken south Godavari. The real designs of contractors soon became evident. Twe hour back-breaking work a day and niggardly meal brought most of them to death. A CPI leader, Gangadhar Paik heard of their plight and tipped off Labour Department officials who ign the matter. Meanwhile, the husbands of women collected 'ransom' money, paid the contractors and rescued them. Non them received their wages.

In Orissa, these modern time "sla are called "da labourers" or tract-labour expo out of the state advance payme For these unfortu inhabitants of interior of this po ty-ridden state dom means sla and for unscrupu contractors, igno ce and the Gov ment's apathy is s gth. "These ha people suffering lently are in fac lands surrounde illiteracy, ignora stark poverty, e me tolerance and man parasites," mented Rabi Das, tor of *Pragativa* local Oriya daily.

Forced Labour: According to a "c servative" official estimate over 1.5 lakh workers are engaged every year by tractors as dadan labourers and exported to work day and night as forced labour. exploitation of dadan labourers in the s everybody admits, is a bitter truth with than 87 per cent of the total population below the poverty line. The situatio getting more horrifying with every fe person a tribal, every seventh a Harijan, again, every fourth person belonging t economically backward community wit any source of livelihood. A recent stituency-wise economic survey condu by the state unit of the Lok Dal revealed a majority of Oriyas in rural areas do no even two square meals a day during the month lean period.

This lean period, December to M provides incentives to the contractors through their agents, hire cheap labour

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them out. Despite repeated ex-
s, these poor people willingly enroll
ves as dadan labourers and return
same stories. Said Nilkanth Sarangi,
n Bidharpur village: "Despite tor-
uman treatment and sometimes kill-
pple are still willing to go out. And all
tractors and their agents have be-
ch through the slave-trade."

owledgeable sources said that what
re tragic was the report that the
n, age-old system, which was con-
Puri, Cuttack and Ganjam districts,
lly spreading to other tribal districts
g Phoolbani and Mayurbhanj.
ion leaders including state Bharatiya
Party (BJP) chief, Vishwa Bhushan
ndan, a former law minister, and CPI
Paikray, who unsuccessfully tried to
a Dadan Labour Protection
ion, alleged that this spreading mis-
ke volumes of the failure of the
ment's schemes including National
mployment Programme (NREP) and
ic Rehabilitation of the Rural Poor
programme under which one lakh
or were to be rehabilitated every year
he Sixth Plan.

E Labour Secretary Kalyan Ray,
ting knowledge of the situation,
d the reports of extortions, torture
assment of dadan workers as "highly
ated". But Deputy Labour
ssioner (in charge of dadan) S.
who listed the Government's legis-
easures to protect the interests of the
workers, admitted that acute unem-
nt problem in the state has resulted in
wing phenomenon of dadan la-
His department, he says, has been
g regular complaints about non-
t of wages and harassments.

cording to official sources, under the
ystem the contractors and their stoo-
rating mostly in Cuttack and Puri,
money to the workers as bait for
nd food besides a promise to pay
onthly retainerships. Eventually they
ded into concentration camps closely
by their toughs and musclemen. The
of their escape are remote.

mi Charan Mahapatra, who wor-
an agent for one of the biggest
tors, Jugul Chandra Pradhan, for
2 years revealed that the system is
ered. At the village level *khatedars*
ssion agents) are posted to lure away
. Each *khatedar* who has usually
as a dadan in the past, gets Rs 10 per
The labourers hired in villages are
over to agents who take them to
es and supervise them. According to
tra, every worker is hired at the
retainership of Rs 100 with free



Mahapatra: explaining the system

food—a pittance considering the long hours.

Agents: Jugul Pradhan, 45, of Balugaon, in Puri district, is a classic example. Twenty years ago, he started as a dadan worker, became an agent and now owns a rice mill, has business interests at many places and is currently constructing a six-storey luxury hotel with an underground bar. "This is going to be the tallest hotel in the state," said his manager supervising the work. Many people alleged that he had employed a large number of local labourers free of cost promising them that if they worked sincerely they would be sent abroad.

According to observers here, there are as many as 250 such agents in Banpur area alone. The number of such agents would be somewhere near 800 in the state. Now, the craze for working abroad has provided the agents and contractors an easier method to get free labour. The *modus operandi*: Thousands of labourers are asked to apply for jobs in the Gulf countries with advance as "security money". They are then taken to far-off places like Delhi, Bombay or other work sites and asked to do free labour as part of their "training". Finally only a handful of them are sent to the Gulf as "tourists" for six months and the rest are either asked to work for another period of six months, again free, or are sent back home on medical grounds. The workers selected, on the other hand, are compelled to sign a document asking the firms to deduct a sum of money from their wages and pay it to the contractors. Said Mahapatra: "Agents are paid Rs 300 per month per labourer sent abroad as 'commission'. Thus when the workers working abroad return, what they have are few hundreds of rupees and tales of miseries in hostile working conditions."

Under the dadan system the contractors and their stooges operating mostly in Cuttack and Puri, advance money to the workers as bait for travel and food besides a promise to pay them monthly retainerships. Eventually they are herded into concentration camps closely guarded by their musclemen.

Official Efforts: Despite the flourishing slave-trade, officials assert that they are taking all possible legislative measures to protect the interests of the dadan labourers. In 1975 a Dadan Labours Act was formulated which failed in the absence of follow-up action. During the Janata regime a similar piece of legislation made it obligatory for the contractors to get brokers registered with the Labour Department along with details of their places of work with the wages being paid to them. But the contractors continue to brazenly violate it. In 1980, the Congress(I) Government drafted rules to back up the Centre's Inter-state Labour Recruitment and Regulation Act but it again could not be implemented for one simple reason—states where the dadan are exported have not formulated any laws.

Officials plead that unless all states have similar laws nothing can be done. The state Government has posted one labour officer in Delhi to oversee the situation. But, at the same time the Labour Department is engaged in a tug-of-war with the Welfare Department over who should get the job. The dadan problem is in fact the Labour Department's "baby", say welfare officials. Labour Department officials, on the other hand, express helplessness over the issue because of the apathy of welfare officers.

Grim Situation: The helplessness of the state Government is evident from the very fact that when Arun De, a CPI legislator moved an adjournment motion in the Assembly last year over the issue, Minister of State for Labour J.K. Patnaik said the Central Government had expressed its inability to either check or trace the dadan labourers that go out of the state and requested the state Government to create an atmosphere to prevent such illegal drafting of poor workers.

Meanwhile, the situation for the exploited labourers is grim with 20 to 25 persons dying every year due to torture or malnutrition in "concentration camps". Opposition leaders feel that no administrative or legislative measures can help check the exploitation unless a better economic situation is created in rural areas. And that is a long way off in Orissa's slave belt.

—FARZAND AHMED in Bhubaneswar

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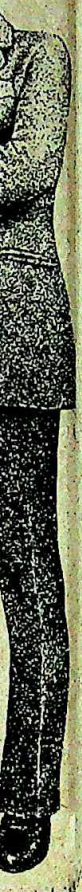
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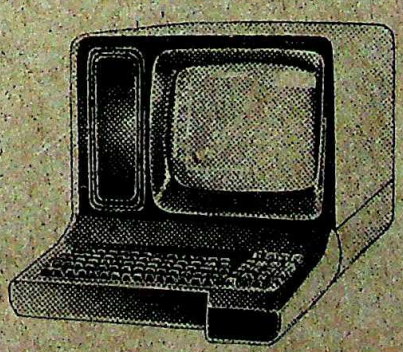
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DRUG ADDICTS

Lending A Helping Hand



Bockenhoff sharing morning tea with the ashramites: a half-way house

THE HIPPIES who flock to Goa have long been a thorn in the side of the authorities. They arrive with little except advanced drug habits and a desire to escape the pressures of Western society. The Government of the Union Territory has never been able to do much to stop this flow. Nor for that matter has it been able to do much to help the washed-up cases who turn up in need of help. The junkies picked up by the police were either sent to prison or dumped in the lunatic asylum at Altino in Panaji.

The task of helping drug addicts who are drawn to Goa has now been taken up by Dr Josef Bockenhoff, 49, a priest who came to Goa one year ago. Bockenhoff decided to set up an ashram where the hippies could stay while they tried to shake off their addiction. Says Bockenhoff: "Our ashram is a half-way house of a certain kind, both for the ones who seek truth and the junkies who are willing to change their lives."

Few Rules: There is no charge for staying in the ashram and the residents all help out with the housework. Meal times are adhered to strictly and the residents begin each meal with a prayer in unintelligible Hindustani. But other than this there are few rules. Admits Bockenhoff: "I have no illusions, for many the ashram is just another place to stay free. And they exploit it."

Bockenhoff has gathered a group of four others who form the inner circle in the ashram. These are: Alka, a British doctor, Karuna, a German nun, Shantiraj, a social worker from Shantivana, and Simon, a 23-year-old hippie. Between them they have handled some pretty hard cases. Bockenhoff estimates that they have looked after more than 500 hippies in the last one year. This is no mean feat especially since it includes 34 with serious mental problems and several others suffering from withdrawal symptoms. These hippies have come from all over the world. The largest number have come from Germany but there have also been the occasional Iranians and even Argentinians.

One of the six rooms in the building has been converted into a chapel but there is no attempt at selling organised religion. Bockenhoff calls his house the OM Yeshu Niketan and makes a conscious attempt to synthesise ideas from Hinduism and Christianity. As if in proof of this, a cross and an OM symbol hang side by side. Bockenhoff who dresses in an immaculate white lungi and kurta, and wears a wooden cross explains his beliefs in esoteric jargon: "The name sums up the spirit of Jesus and OM represents the fourth state of supreme consciousness. It is beyond the senses and is the end of evolution. It is non-duality and love."

Dedicated Work: But though the jargon invites suspicion there is no doubt about Bockenhoff's dedication. Even the police who initially took a dim view of his activities say that they have no trouble from the hippies of the ashram. Says one senior police officer: "We found he was helping the pies and informing their embassies if wanted to be repatriated. This took a bu off our hands."



Bockenhoff: no illusions

At the moment Bockenhoff's main blems revolve around the availabilit money. In the last one year he has spent than Rs 50,000. Nearly all this has cor donations. Now, however, the owner house in which the ashram is situat waiting to sell. Besides it is difficult to h mental patients and far gone drug addi such a small house. As it is a whole ho activities go on side by side. The resi are encouraged to do all the house chores themselves. At any time of the they can be seen wandering around the h either carrying buckets of water, swe the floors or chopping vegeta Bockenhoff says he has no idea of ho raise more funds and suggests that the hope at the moment is that some of th residents of the ashram will rally roun send money.

Bockenhoff admits that his ashr not really equipped to handle difficult He says: "There are times when we c do anything but try and get them admitt a local hospital and inform the next o "But though he doesn't say it, his is the place where the hippies have some ho being taken care of. The local inhabita Goa only exploit the hippies and there other organisation in the Union ter willing to help the wrecks of Western so who are washed up along Goa's sunny fringed coastline.

—ASOKA RAINA in

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TRADE

affic Curbs

T WAS a crackdown the drug ped-llers and their clients were constantly guarding themselves against. Armed a special six-man vice squad, which been operating since January 1981, Goan Government recently swooped n on the unsuspecting drug-peddling ies and their accomplices who throng beaches of Vagator, Anjuma, and doli, deporting 120, out of which 37 drug convictions.

For the Goan authorities, the ever-geoning hippie population has ught in its attendant problems. Said a icipal councillor: "At first we did not d them. But when they brought in the s with them it changed the si-ion." With the induction of Goa's new



A drug addict: hard times ahead

Governor Jagmohan, matters started ove rapidly with the special squad g the problem head on. Said ohan: "The situation had gone out and, although it had not filtered to the l level. I asked the local authorities to effective methods to combat the ing menace."

The squad's efforts over the last year nevertheless, paid rich dividends. m a mere three deportations in 1978 none between '79 and '80, the list rose in 1981 and by the end of last month ed at an astounding 120. The drug has also grown from a measly Rs 300 s 10 lakh over the same years. Said nsher Deol, Goa's superintendent of e and also the chief of the squad: have been successful in cleaning up traffickers and pushing foreigners, had overstayed, out. That again has its own drawbacks. With the availab- of drugs going down, the prices went ing up."

Seasonal Slump: Although Deol is happy with his results, drugs in small quantities are still available. The slump in traffic is predictably due to the non-tourist season during the rains. Come September, and the beginning of the season, big drug operators may return with a vengeance. The squad's enemies, the drug peddlers, some of whom have yet to be nabbed, have meanwhile moved to the hinterlands and are preparing themselves against any possible raid on them by the squad.

The squad, however, does not only have to contend with problems related to drugs. As Alen Desa, a sub-inspector of the squad explained: "The problem is not just in drug trafficking but also peddling stolen passports and travellers cheques." Officials claim that the passport rackets are simple to operate and they only have jurisdiction to arrest violators within their state borders. Although armed, the squad has not till now found any occasion to use their guns.

Ironically it is not always foreigners who are into peddling drugs. Their Indian counterparts have over the years become more adept and sophisticated. They use hippies as carriers, sending drugs in small quantities to be dumped in Goa and to be further siphoned off to hippie enclaves along the coastline. Till recently the two main outlets of drug trafficking were run by Sam Gurbax Biryani, once a small-time peddler in Delhi's Karol Bagh, who graduated to the big time with the tidal hippie influx. Surprisingly, there are no records in the police files on Biryani and his name features only as a bad character in New Delhi's police posts.

Goa's other peddlers are mostly from Delhi's underworld. They have been concentrating their activities largely at Mapsa, a small town 17 km from Goa's capital Panaji. So far the squad's luck in capturing and detecting peddlers and clients has held out. But they are bound to come across hurdles, monitoring hundreds of kilometres of village roads and long stretches of lonely beach fronts.

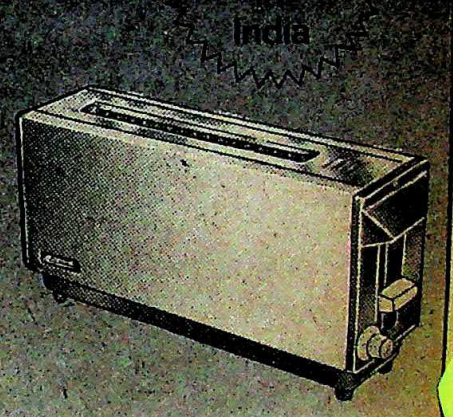
Meanwhile, the crackdown has disturbed the hippie population of Goa, who have managed to stay in spite of their visas running out. Even if they are caught the courts are lax. Said a police official: "For possession of drugs they are just fined Rs 100. For a first offence they are even let off. In rare cases they are sent behind bars and that also only for a couple of months." It only remains to be seen how the special squad deals with the problem in the coming year. With Jagmohan behind the clearing up drive there might be a change for the better.

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The Consumer Gandhi



"WHAT IS GOOD for General Motors is good for America." *That complacent slogan distilled the essence of pre-Vietnam America—a heady brew of low inflation, high production, low unemployment, swift technological innovation and a rapidly expanding middle class. But the clean image of the affluent society, with its corner-stone, the benevolent corporation, cracked for ever with the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement. In particular, the man who took a sledge-hammer to the smooth corporate image was Ralph Nader, who made Americans realise that the corporate hand that fed them also ripped them off, polluted their environment, and made a killing on shoddy and dangerous products.*

Nader burst onto the front pages of newspapers and television screens 17 years ago when he took on that most visible and formidable symbol of corporate power: General Motors (GM). In his book Unsafe At Any Price *he attacked GM's latest car, the Corvair, as being a veritable death-trap. GM responded by hiring private detectives to harass Nader. The attendant publicity made him a household word overnight.*

The word 'consumer' took on a new dimension. Nader's premise is that for democracies to survive, citizens must shed their passivity and secure for themselves a consumer bill of rights to safe products, a healthy environment, decent working conditions and accurate product information. Nader is not opposed to private means of production but he believes that corporations have no right to conduct business at the expense of the safety of the consumer.

Nader organised the consumer movement to embrace and monitor virtually every aspect of American economic life—taxes, broadcasting, unsafe toys, flammable clothing, spurious pharmaceutical products, old age pension schemes, the performance of multinationals and junk foods. The primary organising tool is the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) on college campuses.

There are now about 167 PIRG's throughout the United States. In addition, the gospel is carried by a weekly newspaper column, two magazines, television commentaries and four tax-exempt Washington organisations whose 100 employees work directly for Nader. The PIRG's provide the one million foot-soldiers—workers and volunteers—who conduct national campaigns to rectify wrongdoings against consumers.

Typically, a PIRG is established on a campus after a personal pep talk by Nader. Many become independent groups, still using Nader's name, while others exist as extensions of one of Nader's Washington organisations. PIRG's may receive some initial financial help fr Nader—his Washington groups are worth about $5 million—but t are usually self-sustaining, earning their incomes from student du charitable foundations or direct fund raising. PIRG directors paid officials, usually hired on a personal recommendation fr Nader.

Their victories have been significant—equipping cars with saf belts and emission controls; the creation in Washington of governm tal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency and Consumer Product Safety Commission; penalties on airlines wh bump passengers off flights on which they have reservations, the re of drugs and chemicals that Nader's researchers have found to unsafe; bans on rate hikes by utility companies; major legislation prevent industrial pollution; the campaign against the promotion of infant milk formula in Third World countries that resulted in Unic denunciation of the Nestlé Corporation.

"But we've still got a long way to go," said Nader in the course an exclusive two-hour interview with INDIA TODAY in his clutte Washington office. Nader has no office of his own but chooses any of several rooms in his office complex and settles down at any availa desk. A lanky, gangling man, his six-foot-four-inch frame barely into the chair. His shock of curly hair is greying at the temples and exudes the air of a somewhat absent-minded professor. He spe slowly, in a deep voice, breaking into passionate rhetoric or a guffaw that lights up his entire face. He has dark, deep-set eyes, h cheekbones, a sallow complexion and could easily—were shorter—be type-cast for Hamlet.

The son of Lebanese immigrants, Nader was educated at Harv Law School. Even though he earns about $200,000 a year fr speaking engagements, he spends most of it on his organisations leads a spartan, almost monastic life. An intensely private man, he not reveal where he lives except to say that he has a couple of mode furnished rooms in a rooming house in Washington. He is a bach and owns neither house nor car.

Before the interview, Nader ambled into the waiting-room poured out two cupfuls of apple juice from a jug in a small refrigera "This is the real stuff," he said. "No junk in it. No preservative artificial colouring." The longest lasting impression after an interv with Nader is that he is not only a gifted speaker who can snatch sizz sentences out of thin air but also one of those rare public figures never leave a generalisation dangling. He hardly ever gives a chanc utter "Why?" after he has made a statement. His "because" alw beats you to the verbal draw. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. *How did your movement come as far as it has? How did it grow?*

A. Well, obviously it reflects broad-based support and concern among consumers relating to abuse by corporations. The consumer movement does not have a political machine or money to buy politicians. We've come this far because the movement reflected the facts and values supported by a great many people.

Q. *But how are you any different from other American critics, writers like Thorstein Veblen or the turn-of-the century muck-rakers? Do you belong to a traditional line of American activists?*

A. The difference between the early muck-rakers and ourselves is that we do not just expose and publish. We have institutional follow-up. We have litigators, we have lobbyists and all the groups that have developed across the country.

Q. *Why did your movement start when it did, I mean during a period of relative affluence?*

A. For about 20 years there was no real activity. The ground was fertile since the end of World War II. And a high degree of economic activity historically correlates with expanded social movements.

Q. *You get it from both the Left and the Right. The Right considers you a pain in the butt because it perceives you as attacking free enterprise. The Left argues that the consum movement has displaced the class struggl*

A. From the Right the criticism obvious because we're pushing for a distribution of power which is more ba than a redistribution of wealth or income politics. By focusing on unsafe cars or d meat we focus on the symptoms.

Q. *But wouldn't that be the reason ideological Left would attack you?*

A. It is the symptoms that inte people in the beginning. And then t become more concerned about what causes are. The Left has always been co cerned about production, capital, labo We're trying to look at things much m

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tally. If you can organise the o a different conception of what ny should be all about then every- follows. If you can organise people deceptive life insurance schemes, le, or junk food you are dramati- ging production.

u mean ad hoc economic boycotts? t organisations?

you get people organised in self- ups such as cooperatives you are y affecting the whole production en they can aggregate their know- argain in a powerful position with s and suppliers and manufac- e same holds true for taxpayers onsumers of government services. re purpose of the economy is to consumer, his health, his safety, isn't it about time we start the change from that vantage point?

hy the emphasis on consumption?

o one can blackmail the consumer

one can the work- can say to ers, if you quiet we're lose down or or move to i or South But consu- definition ey in their no one can them. They them, dece- but if con- come more ganised, in- and staffed e enormous ecause they least vulner-

But that re- illing a new conscious- do you ach-

hat's always ge. One way to do it is sector by egin with like grievances. For insurance policy holders have uni- ances. Others are concerned about y, auto safety.

ou have to get them talking to each

he key consumer change, even- s to be in communications. By that cess to and control over radio time sion time so that they can use radio to inform one another without their knees to beg the powers that seconds of evening air time. They can inform one another, people to people, and mobilise one another.

Q. ***So that's basic.***

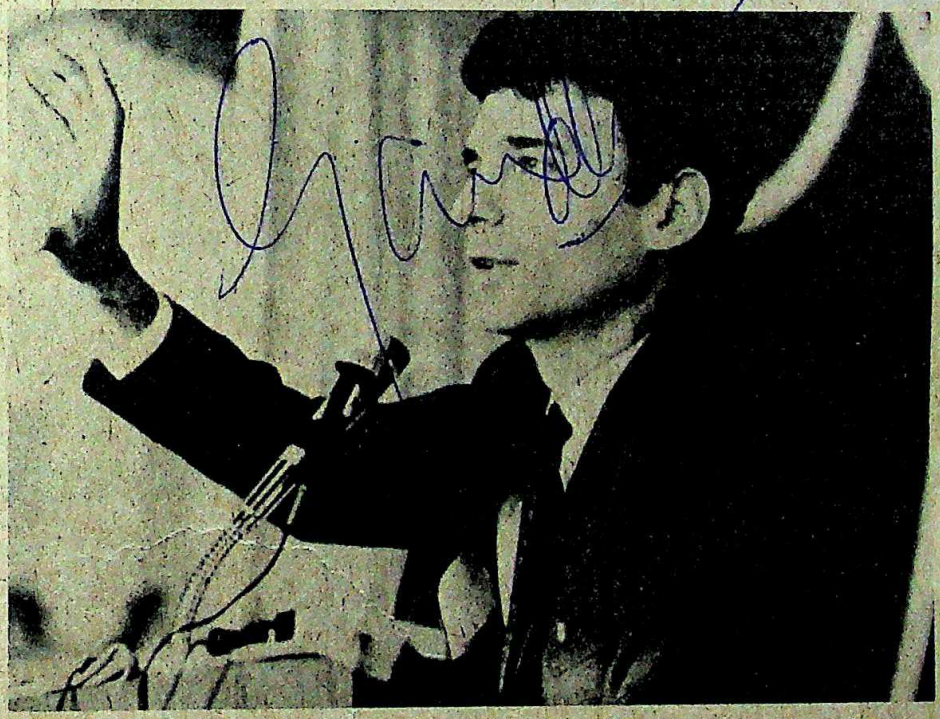
A. The ultimate consumer initiative starts with communications reform. From that all else flows. Then you can see a broader vision of what kind of economy people might want. All this develops out of the micro reforms and the micro exposés.

Q. ***Do you suggest the modes, the shapes?***

A. I suggest certain outlines. For instance I don't think that multinational corporations are compatible with democratic society or even respect for future generations.

Q. ***You criticise big corporations and big government. But don't your solutions—seeking more regulations and controls—in themselves create even bigger government?***

A. No they don't. The biggest government is in the area of the military and social services. My proposals would create the kind of economy that would require less social services from the Government and create a rule of law which polices the abuses of institutions against consumers.



Nader: "multinational corporations are not compatible with democratic society"

Q. ***Americans are generally unconcerned about the plight of the Third World or even its existence. But it is clear that Ralph Nader cares about the developing world. Your voice has been heard in such forums as the WHO and Unicef. Where does your concern about the Third World originate?***

A. Before I started the auto safety drive I travelled a lot in Africa and Latin America and West Asia. As an American I couldn't do much for these countries directly. But I could go back to my own country and deal with the rapacious impact of corporations often allied with the Government *vis-a-vis* these countries. The most recent example of this is the lifting of the ban on the export of hazardous material by the Reagan Administration. Now the US won't even have to notify the Indian Government about drugs and pesticides that are illegal in this country but are being exported to India.

Q. ***There appears to be a double standard.***

A. Yes. In monitoring multinationals one sees how extraordinarily abusive they are in the Third World compared to Western society because they hook up with local oligarchies. They are unrestrained in their bribing and payoffs to politicians and have been known to overthrow governments that try and stand up to them.

Q. ***What sort of action can people in the Third World take?***

A. The other reason for my concern with the Third World is that the consumer cause seems to be the only legitimate citizen action that many of the authoritarian regimes tolerate, like Brazil and some others in South East Asia. They will tolerate political movements. They will tolerate and sometimes encourage movements that will defend consumers against business abuses and multinationals.

Q. ***But what if the consumers target a business group that finances the regime?***

A. Well, that's where they get skittish. When you look at these authoritarian regimes there's nothing permitted except some safety and environmental protection activity.

Q. ***Have there been consumer victories in the Third World?***

A. We've had tremendous success in places like Brazil, Malaysia and Philippines in the campaign against the marketing of infant milk formula. The infant formula is a typical example of how insidiously destructive a multinational can be—and also an example of how they can be brought to heel by the consumer movement. Imagine if there was a better communications system between consumer groups world-wide, how

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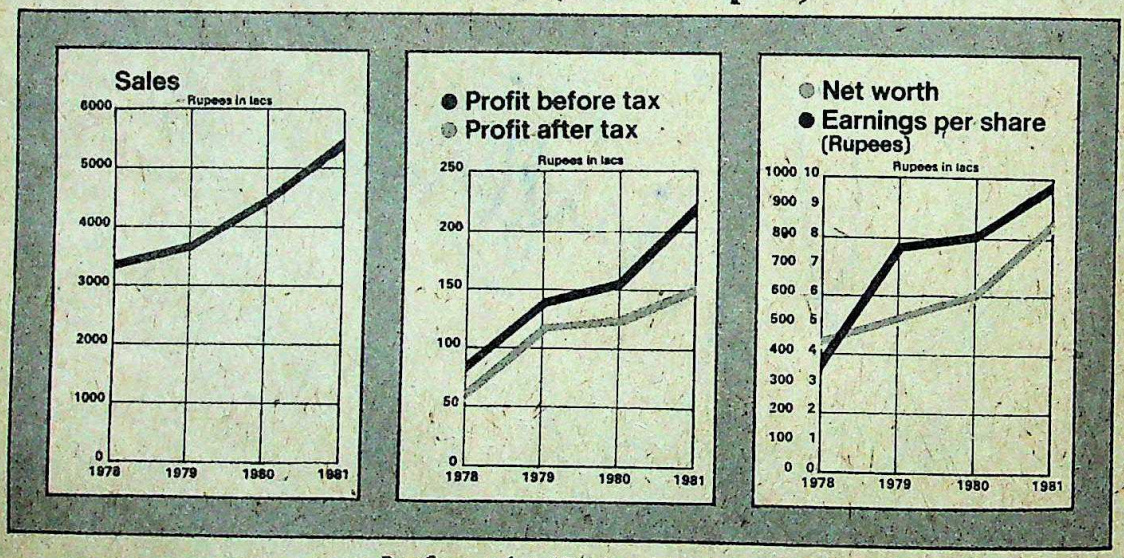
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Chairman M K Kumar in his review of 1981.

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- "For ensuring long-term growth... a plan to upgrade technology by associating with international firms..."
- "In view of the increasing emphasis for self-reliance in defence requirements, we are expanding our production facilities to meet defence needs."
- "Further steps to strengthen the capital base of the company and reduce dependence on short-term loans are now under consideration."

Excerpts from the Chairman, Mr M K Kumar's review of the Company's performance in 1981.

Best & Crompton

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er it would be. Imagine if there tellite hookup and a consumer hat we can beam back and forth ndia, Africa, Latin America and

re there really tangible victories for ent?

here can be massive victories. In 0 years in the US hundreds of of Americans have been saved ghways because of safer cars and injuries prevented or diminished f the campaign that resulted in the n of seat-belts.

The auto companies fought you on es. They are now fighting you on the stallation of protective airbags that e and protect passengers upon any

is amazing how these companies t against very modest de- civilise them. In the old days the were to take the ownership away m, to socialise or na- them. Now the consu- vironmental demands t poison the air and soil, don't cheat, rip mers, don't produce s products. And ighting against these dest demands.

But they claim that these lead to over-regulation overnment and a fall in n.

hey're so badly mismanaged, these porations, that they have to find a t because they can't blame them- ile they're losing out to the Japa- they magnify the effects of these ns as the cause of their woes.

the consumer movement necessarily uct of the affluent society? Do you ge middle class, a viable middle class happen?

ou always do. Every major change history has come from the middle n though lower economic classes are later on. Lenin came from the lass, as did America's populist pro- . So did Gandhi and some of the leaders in Brazil. And the reason is If you're virtually starving and d to disease and lack of shelter you ve the luxury to think of change, or n. And you may not be literate.

But you battle both private and public acies.

The common bond of mankind be bureaucracy in the sense that institutions from widely differing have the same problems, lethargies, buck inefficiencies, sinecurism. In e the mayor of New York and the mayor of Moscow and the mayor of New Delhi speak a common language. That's why I believe that so many of the reforms are transplantable. The ombudsman concept, for example, would apply to the Third World, the socialist world and to the US.

Q. *In countries like India there exists an insidious—and invidious—government device called the Official Secrets Act. The United States has just the opposite—the Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) *under which the Government must release information about itself to the public. Did the consumer movement create the* FOIA *or did the relative freedom of information create the consumer movement?*

A. We strengthened FOIA. For several years citizens' groups kept hammering away at the Government by getting files showing government to be wasteful and not defending people under consumer and environmental laws. This built up an enormous basis for strengthening FOIA. Secrecy is another common bond between bureaucracies world-wide. They don't want to be held open to scrutiny and accountability.

The impact has not come yet. It's come on little cat feet. It's come in nuances such as politicians not being able to ignore consumers like they could 25 years ago. And consumerism has begun insinuating itself in politics at election time. But we're still seeing the tip of the iceberg. When it does emerge full blown it will do so with major political impact and effect.

Q. *There have been some obvious victories such as the humbling of Nestlé in world forums. But what has been the most visible political impact of your movement?*

A. If you want to find out what is the most potential source of change in society you'll have to ask a question: Which areas of society are least covered by the media and the politicians? Time and time again all these high-faluting government economists talk about the economy, inflation and monetary policy and productivity indices but they never talk about the consumer. This is because the consumer is the potential force for change. They want to ignore him because the consumer's going to pay all the bills as long as sleeping dogs lie. So all their screw-ups end up on the shoulders of consumers.

Q. *What then is the lasting political impact of the movement?*

A. The impact has not come yet. It's come on little cat feet, it's come in nuances such as politicians not being able to ignore consumers like they could 25 years ago. And consumerism has begun insinuating itself in politics at election time. But we're still seeing the tip of the iceberg. When it does emerge full blown it will do so with major political impact and effect.

Q. *How do you force politicians out of representing special groups and narrow vested interests and into embracing a more broadly-based consumer interest?*

A. This has not yet developed. But Reagan will be the cause of it. His Administration has become so bald, so blatant, so corrupt, so special interest-oriented, so venal, so insensitive that it will jar that critical mass of activity that is needed. But it won't happen automatically through impersonal social forces.

Q. *What do you mean?*

A. There have got to be organisers. You have an abuse disclosed, you have the perceived disgruntlement of consumers but you have a missing link. The missing link is a proposal that they can latch on to.

Q. *Looking at you now, Ralph, it seems like, here's this guy who's now on the scene. He had an agenda, he had all this planned, he had the* PIRG *concept all thought out and ready to go and that all along he had been sitting cloistered by himself in some remote monastery and dreaming up all these diabolical anti-corporate plots, and suddenly he latched on to a theme and wrote this book about General Motors, got a lot of publicity and, bingo, his plans went into motion. Did it really happen that way?*

A. Yeah.

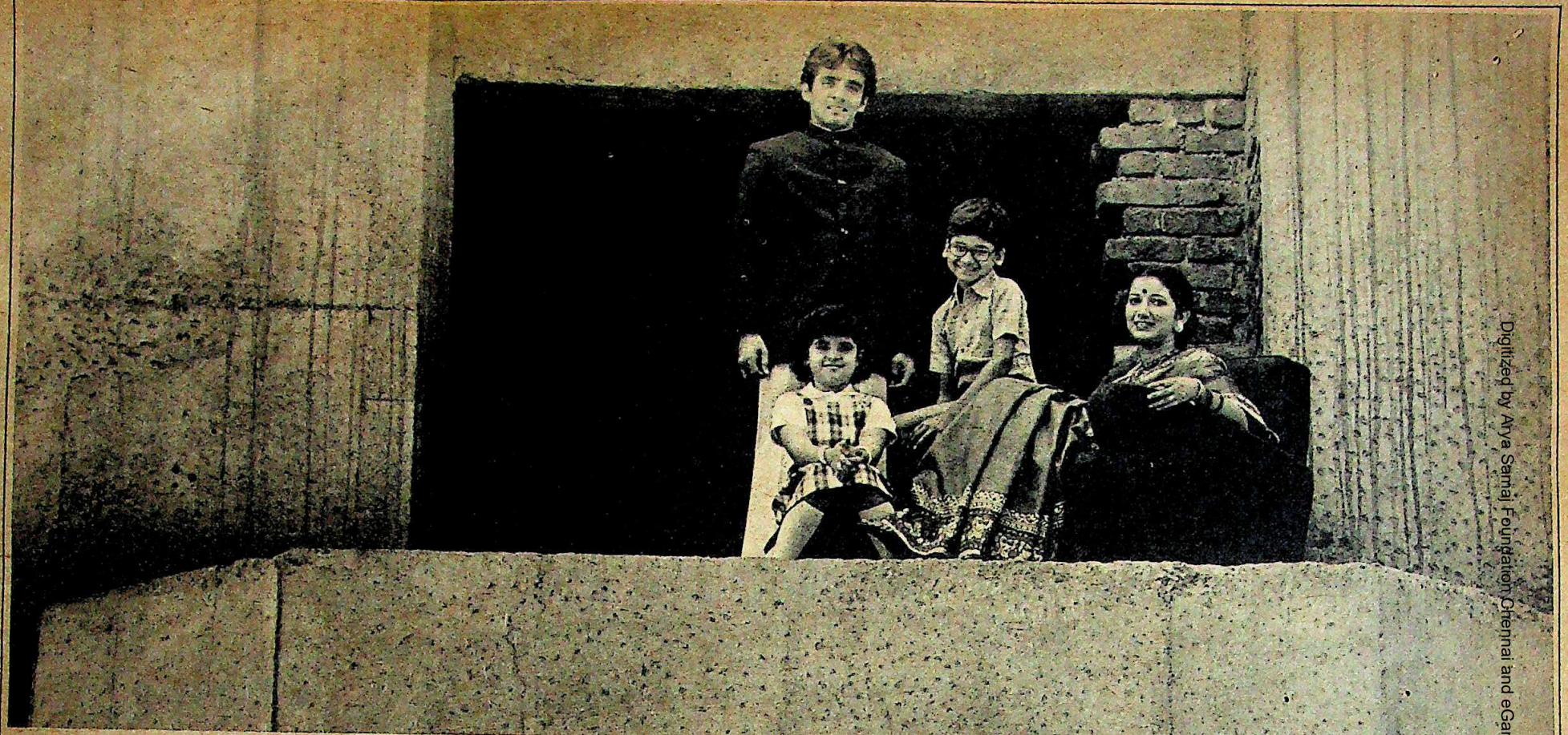
Q. *You mean you really sat around planning and plotting this movement?*

A. Yeah. Except that it didn't go anywhere near as fast as I wanted it to go. The Nixon-Ford years slowed down the movement because so much of the media attention was focussed on the Watergate scandal. I'd do some things differently now. We went the route of litigating and lobbying. I realise that organising is more important. The PIRGS are a result of organising. In a country like India organisers would be the most important.

Q. *What is the biggest challenge to organising?*

A. Even though consumer issues are supported on a more deep and broad base and cut across economic, religious and social lines the biggest challenge is effective strategy like developing audience networks, self-financing and door-to-door canvassing. Fifteen years ago I'd have to spend 20 minutes trying to convince an audience that General Motors could do anything wrong. But since that time there has been a revolution in public disgust with large corporate interests, market-place abuse and environmental pollution.

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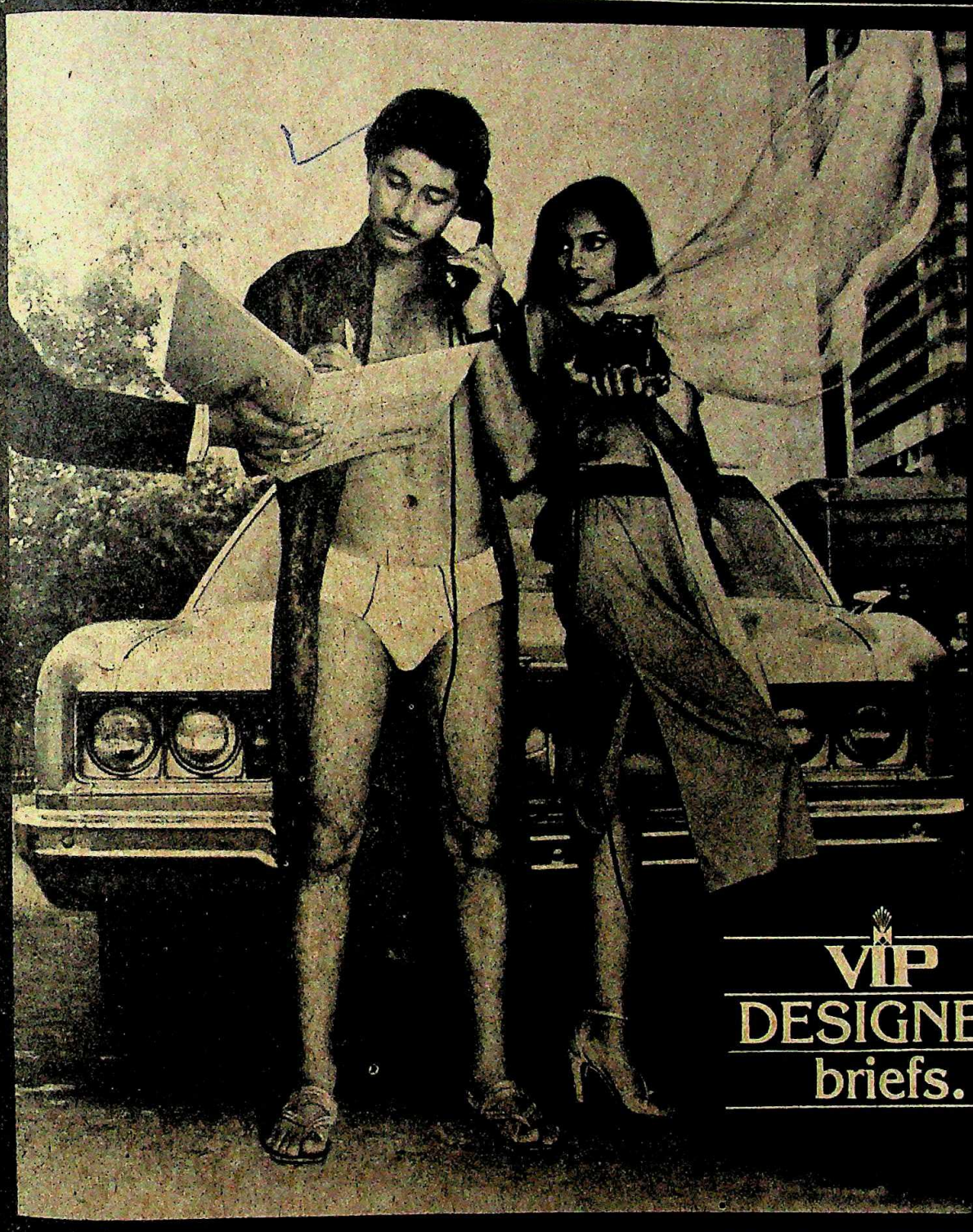
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UK ASIANS

Shopping For Success

THE MUNIFICENCE of Britain's Asian community, responsible for raising over £100,000 for the Festival of India has largely gone unheralded. Even the small exhibition profile devoted to their entrepreneurship portrays only a slice of the success story.

The exhibition called 'Britain and India' examines the 235-year-old relationship between the two countries. "It was primarily an economic relationship to begin with," pointed out one academic. Just as the British had sought out India in the 17th Century mainly to expand trade opportunities, the basic Indian interest in Britain today is economic.



SUMAN DUBEY

An Asian grocery family in London: shrewd entrepreneurship

"Why did I come to Britain? Why to better my prospects of course," says one successful businessman Parvesh Maini, who came to this country in the 1940s. Maini's is not the only success story. Indian entrepreneurs in Britain have never had it so good.

"Asian grocers will account for almost 50 per cent of the grocery business in Britain in five years time," predicted the managing director of one of Britain's biggest groups of independent grocers last year. "They have recognised a consumer need and filled it earlier than others." The Asian entry into the grocery business began in earnest with the arrival of the East African Asians in Britain in 1971–72. Unlike the earlier immigrants from the subcontinent these later arrivals came with money to invest. Most of them already had businesses in Africa.

Head Start: Parveen Datta came to Britain from Kenya in 1974. His father had already settled here. Back in Kenya the family had had a well established retail supplying business and boasted of a high social and business position in the Indian community. When Datta decided to settle in Britain he had over £15,000 to invest in a small shop. Said he: "It took me over 18 months to find something. There is no one to guide you. I found British estate agents very reluctant to deal with Asians. In many areas English shop owners were not willing to sell to Asians. Finally I bought my present grocery shop from another Asian family."

Buying a shop is not a simple matter particularly for Asian shop owners. "We usually try to check out the area first to see if it is a good one. We have to be extra careful about racial feelings, also muggings, robberies and things like that," explains a small grocery owner from Kenya. These irritants are common in many big cities. Shop-lifting, for instance, occurs often in Asian-owned shops because the owners are, as a rule, not known to fight back.

The Datta shop is a fair example of small Asian traders in Britain. Despite his business background in Kenya, Datta found it difficult in the beginning to understand the cut-and-thrust methods operative in the British grocery business. But the business prospers now. Datta lives with his mother, brother (who has his own shop too) and sister in a nearby house. Both his mother and sister help in the shop. Unlike most other family concerns, Datta pays his sister a "fair of wage", but not his mother. He also employs a part-time Asian worker. Explaining his success Datta says: "We have to be friendly you know. Many old people come into small grocery stores rather than the big markets because they often want a little chat after they have bought their things."

Perceptible Effect: In fact the mushrooming appearance of Chinese take-away food outlets and Indian grocery stores is completely changing the character of London's streets and many streets in the Midland cities like Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Bradford and others. In one particular small London street, within the space of four years, 10 shops out of 12 changed hands to Asian owners. In many cases the shops changed their character and became wholly stocked groceries, selling Indian food, Indian vegetables, magazines and concert tickets. Streets of Southall now look more like Chandni Chowk than Oxford Street. But "We are very flexible", says Datta, "we try to stock things our customers ask for, whether it is custard powder or *bhindi*."

Flexibility is not limited to goods alone. Grocery stores run by immigrants from Greece, Italy, Hong Kong and the Indian subcontinent have revolutionised British shopping style by staying open seven days a week and often 12 hours a day. "We work hard and that is why we are successful" is an Asian businessman's maxim.

Asian entrepreneurial success has recently begun to be noted in British business circles. Alan Toft, editor of *Independent Grocer*, a business magazine for the grocery trade, says of the Asian communities' success in this field: "I think it is definitely to be welcomed. They have brought a vitality to the trade that we did not have before. They are good salesmen and have a keen eye for a bargain." Toft's magazine often carries articles on the problems and successes of Asian grocers. Is there a likelihood of a backlash against Asian businessmen because they have become too successful? Not so, says Toft, although Asian business premises

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...ds were often the target of mobs ... summer's riots.

...sification: If the grocery trade is ...y for the shrewd Asian entrep... ...her trades are also succumbing to ...ssive push. The East African Patel ..., once employed in clerical jobs ...ffices in Africa, has made a strong ...ther refugees from Africa to take ...on's post offices and newsagents. ...o prejudice in this type of work—I ...lish people who don't like Asians ...I shall not go to this post office ...hey?", explained one Indian from ...o also bought his shop from ...ian family. There's the added bait ...government salary for post office ... much competition, and a little ...es a long way here.

...areas where Asians have made a serious takeover bid are chemists shops with a qualified pharmacist in attendance and electrical and radio shops. Chemist Mansukh Shah moved to Britain from Kenya in 1973. "I found it very difficult to get a job when I first came here. Even with a degree in pharmacy, hospital jobs were difficult to get. So I decided to be my own boss and bought this chemists shop," says Shah who estimated his annual income at approximately £150,000.

One of the major stumbling-blocks for small businessmen from East Africa and Asia in Britain has been the initial reluctance of banks to lend money or for wholesalers to allow credit. Parkash Singh Maini, a 59-year-old garment factory owner, from Southall felt that a company had to be well established for banks to agree to a loan. "But now," says Maini, "things have changed. It is easier for Asian businessmen to borrow money because we have established a reputation of being successful." Maini was one of many Indians who came to Britain in the post-Independence era and had to slog at the factory floor to save money for a business. He started by making car coats with a capital of only £500 saved from his job with a gas components factory. "Now we produce 10,000 pairs of jeans per week. I have my showroom and my own brand of jeans.'

Exploitation: But not everybody is happy with the rags-to-riches Asian businessmen. Exploitation of cheap immigrant



Gulu and Vimla: glamorous lifestyle

...TONE

...und System

YOUNG, energetic, swinging and successful are terms that easily come to mind when describing 43-...old Gulu Lalvani. In Bombay, he ...his glamorous wife Vimla (daughter ...e wealthy Sindhi Watumull family of ...olulu) could easily pass of as screen ...nalities; in London, they personify ...ess.

It wasn't always so. Born into a ...perous Bombay family with interests ...e pharmaceutical trade, Gulu and his ...er Partap came to study engineering ...eds in the 1950s. "I got bored with ...ourse after a bit," says Gulu. "There ... these two Jewish boys in college who ... a flashy life-style with lots of money. ...sked them how they did it and found ... that they sold jewellery for their ...er. So my brother and I went into ...same line." Family connections in ...g Kong ensured a steady supply of ...p costume jewellery for the brothers ...ell privately and in market stalls. ...en my father gave us the first £5,000 ...t up in business properly, and we ...me wholesale suppliers from a small ... in London. We didn't know the ...ness very well and often found our-...s landed with thousands of necklaces ...use the fashion had changed and ...ody wanted chains any longer." The ...utous debut of cheap Hong Kong ...et transistor radios in the West in the ...'60s, set the Lalvani brothers well on ...way to electronic riches. "The timing ... perfect, we couldn't sell them fast ...gh," recalls Gulu.

Today electronic products made in factories in Japan, Korea and Hong Kong are sold under the Lalvani label 'Binatone'. These include stereo cassette players, recorders, car radios, telephone answering machines, small kitchen cookers and toasters among other electronic goods.

Binatone has become the biggest privately owned electronics company in Britain with a turnover of about £25 million last year and profits of over £1 million.

Competitive Instinct: Binatone's success, Gulu believes is due to the fact that it has been able to supply goods at competitive prices at the right time. When the British Government set its seal of approval on Citizen's Band (CB) receiver sets, the Lalvani brothers were prepared with ready stocks of thousands of sets in their shops. "It's a very exciting business to be in," enthuses Gulu. "We are now venturing into the video recorder and personal computer products field." Binatone have also floated a company in Bombay and will be producing 12-inch portable TV sets selling at Rs 1,000 in India by next year. Says Gulu: "There has been no incentive for Indian manufacturers to improve their products and the technology is therefore very old. But I was born in India and am proud of the fact. Recently the Indian Government's restrictions on investment from abroad have been relaxed, so we have decided to enter the Indian market."

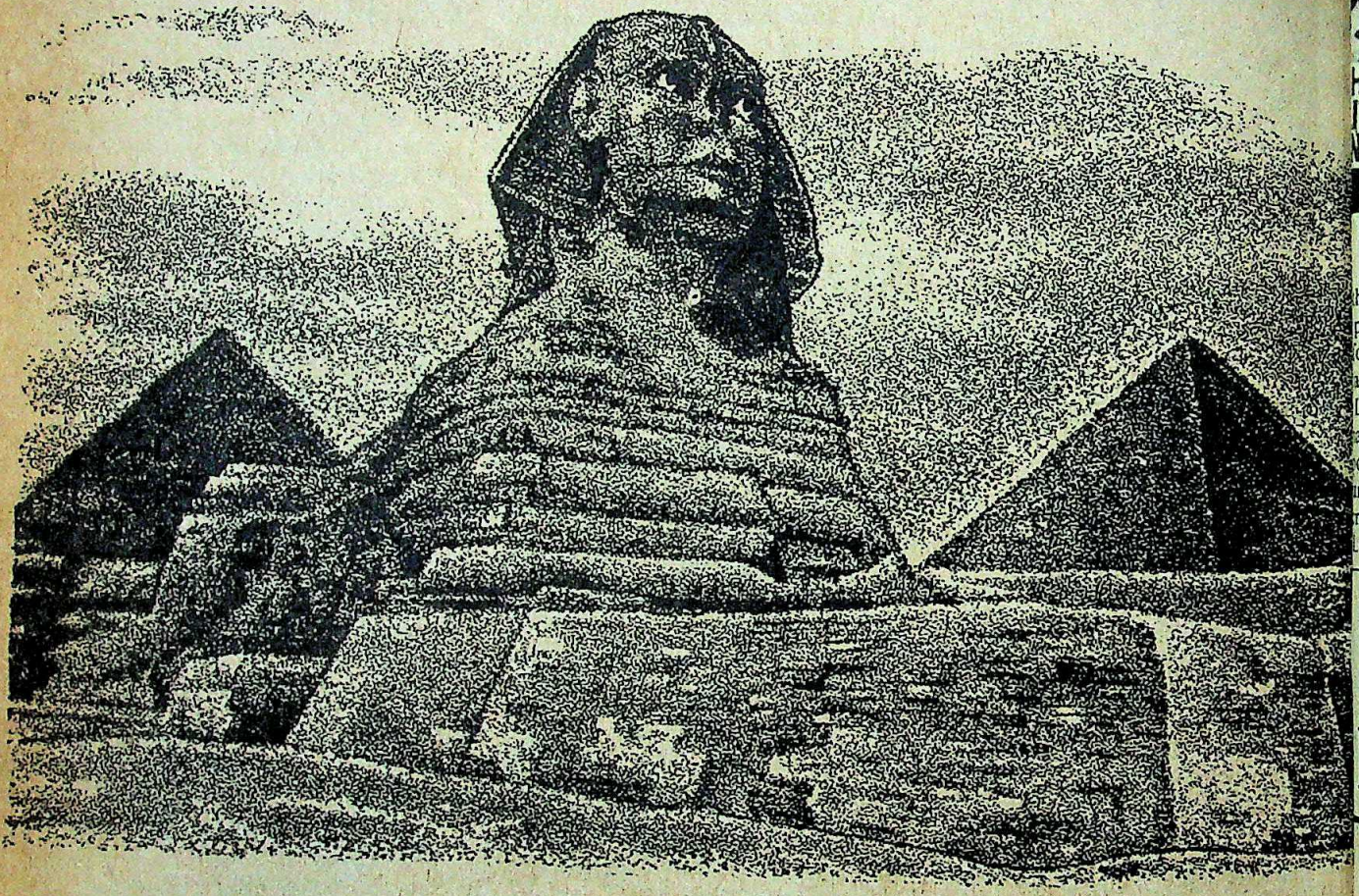
The Lalvanis stand not only as an example of Asian entrepreneurial success but also, in a sense, an example of business integration in British society. Money opens all doors and Binatone is not fighting shy. From British football sponsorship to prizes at United Nations charity balls, from Binatone CB receiver sets for the Blind Club to CB radios for army expeditions, the Lalvani brothers energetically push their products everywhere.

Gulu puts down hard work and a keen knowledge of the market as the basis of his success. "The electronic market is sure and that is why many Asians succeed in it. The competition is fierce and that in itself is an incentive. If you relax, someone else will take over." Gulu and Partap are surrounded by the trappings of luxury—a Rolls-Royce in the garage, houses with sprawling green lawns in London's wealthiest suburbs and social attention of the right kind. But they are definitely not relaxing.

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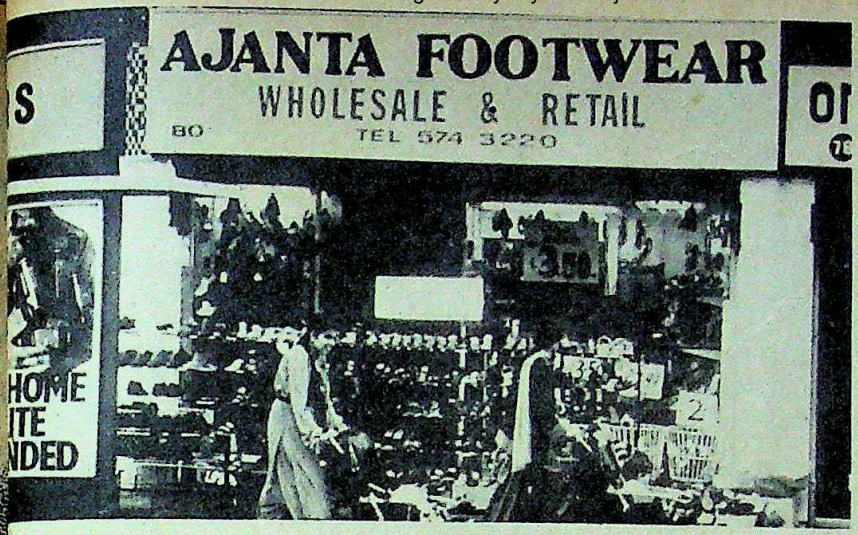
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Indians shopping in Southall: dominating the High streets

he main accusation made against protracted strike by Asian women or better pay and union repre- at the Grunwick film processing London a few years ago, brought any of the restrictions and pro- osed on Asian workers by their ntrymen. From the 'sweatshop' raping a bare living, working long London's East End clothing fac- tories, to young girls working in family owned businesses, the story is the same. The high profit margin demanded by 12-hour shops also means high prices at Asian-owned shops. The family unit nature of these small businesses and shops also reduces employ- ment opportunities for outsiders. It is rare indeed to find Asian shops employing white assistants whereas Indian girls operating the check-out counter at most big supermarkets are a common sight. "We just can't afford to employ English assistants," said one shop- keeper revealingly.

The drive and ambition of the Asian community has often taken them into daring trades. Ghani Choudhury from Pakistan runs a men's clothing shop close to London's well-known Saville Row and can reel off names of any number of important poli- ticians, actors and wealthy men as his clients. Bashir Maan, a wealthy supermarket owner in Glasgow, started off in business selling whisky to the Scots. Now he is a Justice of the Peace and a prominent resident.

The overriding desire for independence, and respect and recognition from the host community, have been responsible for the success of many immigrants. Some of those from the Indian subcontinent feel that their hard-earned qualifications and experience are disregarded by British employers. "When I came to this country I had never worked for anyone," says Datta. "We are a trading community, business is in our blood. If you have your own business, you are your own boss. you earn more and you can't be fired." With over three million unemployed in Britain, totting up profits from the little corner shop at the end of the year makes sense to many Asians here.

BONNY MUKHERJEE

Etiquette

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FIJI

An Ethnic Election

LAST MONTH's elections in the Mauritius islands which ushered in a left-wing government received unusually wide coverage in the Indian media. Not so much because of the colour of the new government but its close association with India. Last fortnight, another island state with close Indian connections—Fiji—set its own electoral wheels in motion and the results, due later this month, will also be of considerable significance to India. Fiji (pop: 607,000) has an Indian population of 310,179, which makes it the largest ethnic group in the island state and, therefore, of considerable political importance. The



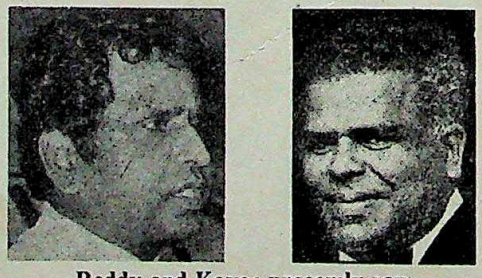
Mrs Gandhi and Mara in Fiji

second largest group are the Fijians, or Kaivitis, who number around 275,737 or about 44.6 per cent of the population. The July 10 election is Fiji's third General Election to the House of Representatives which has 52 seats. Of them, 22 are reserved for Indians, 22 for Fijians and the remaining eight for other categories referred to as General Electors. The balance of power, therefore, rests with the last group who have traditionally voted on the side of the Fijians.

Fiji's elections, unlike Mauritius, are not held on religious divisions but on racial or ethnic factors. Indians, for instance, are still referred to as Indians even though they may have been born in Fiji, and are classified as second class citizens. Fiji has a bicameral parliamentary system with the upper house, or the Senate, having 22 members of which the Council of Chiefs nominates eight, the prime minister seven and the rest by the leader of the Opposition. The Council of Chiefs, a traditional hangover from pre-independence days, is dominated by the upper strata Fijians. The electoral dice is loaded pretty heavily in favour of the Fijians.

Indians Encouraged: But political expediency has created its own divisions and marriages leaving two major political parties in the fray—the ruling Alliance Party and the National Federation Party (NFP) which is a breakaway party. The Alliance, under Prime Minister Sir Ratu Kimensese Mara, has been ruling the country since 1970, when Fiji got its independence from Britain. Mara, a shrewd statesman, has played the Indian card well and encouraged internal divisions in Indian ranks. Currently, the Alliance has 21 Fijians as against seven Indians in the House of Representatives while the Opposition has 12 Indians. But Mara has also squashed any Indians who proved themselves possible challengers. Three prominent Indians, Sir Vijay R. Singh, James Shankar Singh and Vivekananda Sharma, were all dropped from his ministry in turn and replaced by non-Indians. The consequences of that could prove a crucial factor in the elections.

The rejected Indians have turned naturally to the NFP. In fact, the NFP has secured a majority in the 1977 elections and was in a position to form a government along with support of other Indians. But an unseemly row between the current leader of the NFP, Jairam Reddy, and the leader of the Indian Muslim community, S.M. Koya put the ball



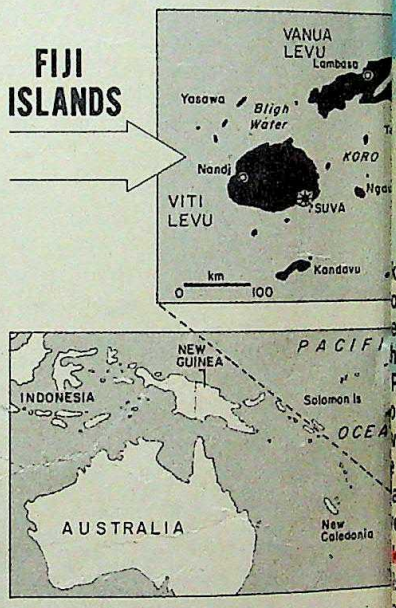
Reddy and Koya: unseemly row

in the court of the governor-general, who promptly asked Mara to form the Government.

But this time round, Mara may not find it easy to retain his perch, and that too, as a direct result of the differences in the Indian community. The Alliance has traditionally received its support from the rich Indians who are Gujaratis and Punjabis. But it is the south Indian community in Fiji who comprise 90 per cent of the Indian population, who will clearly call the shots this time and indications are that they will o their Gujarati brethren and range s behind the NFP and its leader, Reddy surprisingly, the NFP is already being d as an Indian party.

Latest reports from Fiji indicat the NFP is being supported by the W United Front (WUF), a Fijian party leader, Osae Gavidi, has promised a g ment run on non-racial lines and to pr amity among the multi-racial comm Significantly, the NFP has not fielded dates in constituencies where the v contesting.

Rabidly Racialist: But a dark h the Fijian elections is the Fijian Nati Party (FNP) which, as its name sugg advocating the deportation of all Indi their country of origin, nationalisat industry without compensation and



ration of all property to their o owners. Though a rabidly racialist pa FNP has obviously struck a symp chord among many Fijians and its p sloganeering could win the party som pected votes and upset the calculat the two major parties in the bargain

Already, there are signs that the of south Indian origins are begin worry about the increasing signs of m lism and their future in Fiji. Mara ha little to alleviate their fears by his pro to appoint Fijians in all the key pos leave them the crumbs. They are al gruntled at the stagnation in their life Most of them are sugar plantation w whose standard of living has change over the years. They see the NFP a better bet for their future and their a could eventually determine the ques who runs Fiji.

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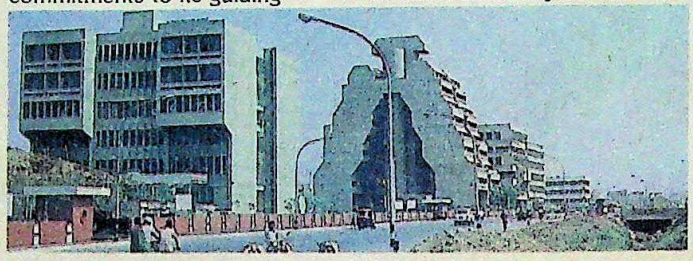
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Land sold at just Rs 2.5 per square metre by DDA

Hospitals, educational and other institutions reap benefits.

An assessment of DDA's activities over a period of two decades reveals that among other feathers in its cap, this non-profit Public Agency can take ample credit for enhancing the standard of living of Delhi's residents by providing land at the incredible sum of Rs. 1.25 per square metre to institutions.

In general, a partial assessment of land allocation for schools in Delhi amounts to a total of 147 hectares; for social welfare 23.5 hectares, for hospitals 36 hectares, and for religious purposes 2 hectares.
This is uncontrovertible evidence that DDA, having pioneered in 1962 the concept of an urban land bank and massive socialisation of land, has not forgotten its commitments to its guiding principles. In the face of a nation-wide increase in land prices, and a sharp increase in the Nation's capital, DDA through its policy of discounts for institutions, has stepped forward to place the benefits of planned development in the hands of the common man whom it ultimately serves.



26-Hectare Asiad Village complex

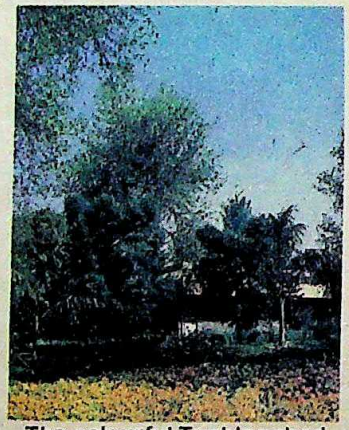
A major achievement of the Asian Games will be the 26 Asian Games Village. Locat in the historic Siri Fort area drawing inspiration from the locale, an ancient site of one Delhi's seven cities, DDA's architects have endeavoured give this Village Complex a definite visual character and blend it with 20th century functional efficiency. This complex, consisting of 853 dwelling units has been designed as a place for the enrichment of Delhi's cultur heritage—a total urban form not just a two-dimensional zonal plan approach.

After the Games, it is expe that most of the non-reside areas will be occupied by commercial enterprises.

1.21 hectares of greenery for every 1000 persons

1 Tree per person in the Nation's Capital

DDA has developed 750 parks, 52 city forests and woodlands, 15 rock gardens, 11 man-made lakes, a deer park, bird sanctuaries, play-grounds for every community and children's parks in an effort to create an environment of leisure and aesthetic beauty for the residents of the city.
By 1981 census estimates, 57 lakh people reside in urban Delhi—the Delhi Development Authority has set its sights on providing one tree for every resident of the city.



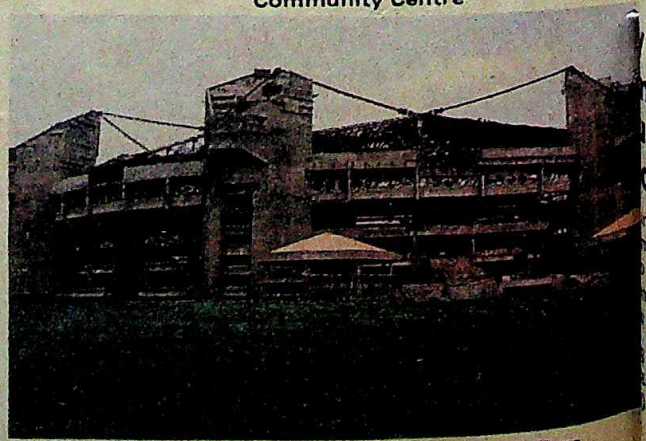
The colourful Tughlaqabad city forest



A pleasant oasis in the midst of Vasant Lok Community Centre

Asia's largest free-span stadium nears completion for IX Asian Games

The age of technological excellence has truly arrived in India. This Indoor Stadium, the largest in Asia, ranks third largest in the world. Its half-kilometre circumference will encompass facilities to compete with the world's best. The six-story high, 2,000 tonne dome will house 25,000 people to view sporting events which will be specially illuminated for colour TV. A unique feature of this fully airconditioned stadium is a soundproof partition that will divide it in half, in a mere 7 minutes so that two events can be held simultaneously.
Outside the stadium, is a players' block, which will be converted into a full-facilities hotel after the Asiad, and 4 kiosks, with ample parking space, which will serve as shops, restaurants and offices during and after Asia's greatest sporting event Adjacent to the stadium is a cycle velodrome.

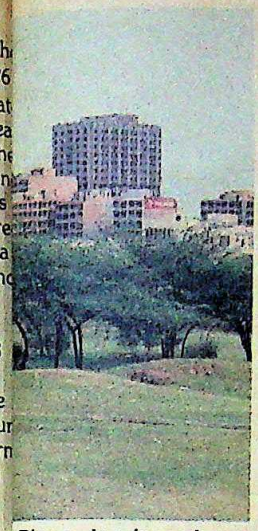


The world's third largest Indoor Stadium

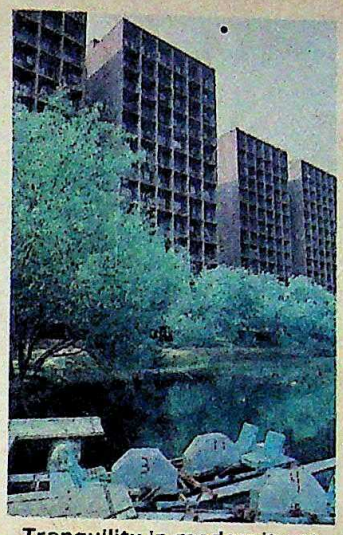
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ommercial land auctioned by DDA comprises only 3% of total area

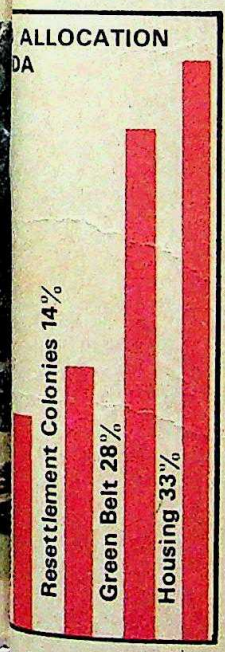


Place—landscaping
r environment



Tranquility in modernity at Rajendra Place

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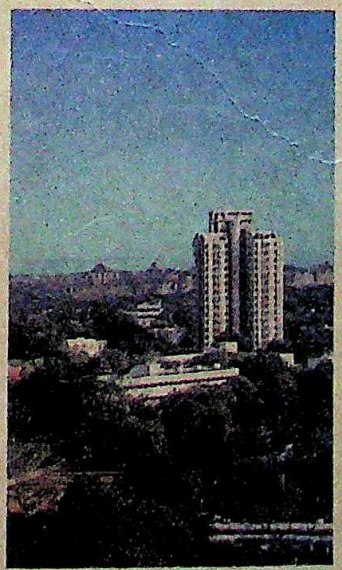


To date, only 3% has been auctioned for commercial purposes while 11% has been allocated to institutional areas, 28% to green belts, 14% to resettlement colonies and 33% to housing.

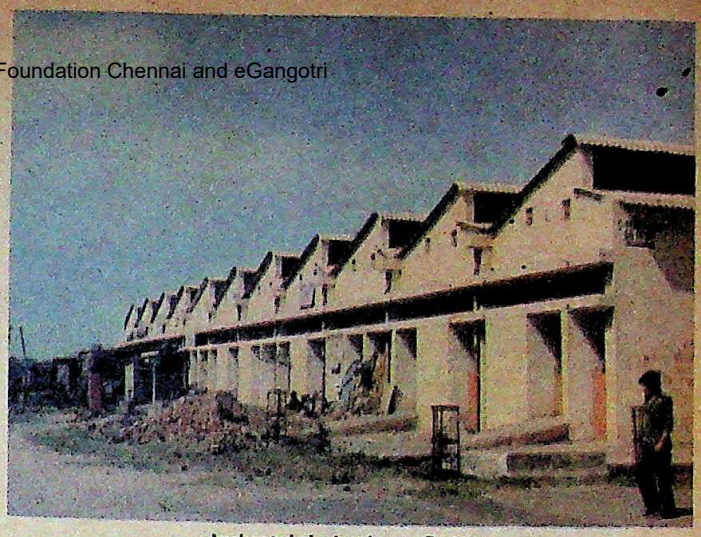
View from the Top

A look at the scenario from the roof-top of any multi-storeyed building, in the centre of Delhi, reveals kilometres of greenery, interspersed with wide recreation grounds adjoining residential sections and old monuments.

The ratio of commercially developed land, which is 3% to other land usage is clearly understood when seen visually.



The old and the new.. and lots of green



Industrial sheds at Okhla

DDA gives a new direction to industries

A total of 100 commercial centres under construction will facilitate easy trade and industrial conditions in and around Delhi.

These centres built by DDA are the backbone of commerce and industry, adding incalculably to the economic strength and employment potential in Delhi. The Cycle Market at Jhandewalan has provided that trade with one of the most important centres for cycles and accessories in the country. At Sheikh Sarai and Hauz Khas, kiosks have provided employment and trade opportunities to vendors. Industrial sheds in Okhla have helped new industries and entrepreneurs to add to Delhi's commercial, industrial and export activity. And across the River Yamuna, DDA has laid the infrastructure for light and heavy industries in an innovative, methodical manner to turn that area into one of the most important industrial sectors by the turn of the century.

How DDA keeps pace with the Prime Minister's 20-point programme

By the end of 1982, all eligible Co-operative Group Housing Societies will have received allotments. Currently, land is as cheap as Rs. 110/- per square metre in trans-Yamuna areas, Bodella and Rohini, and Rs. 135/- per square metre in Rohtak Road and Pitampura areas. It is anticipated that 60,000 dwelling units will be built on this land allotted by DDA.

This scheme is in furtherance of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's 20-point programme and is a progressive step towards making the concept of social security more meaningful.

Commercial crowding in Metropolitan Delhi eased substantially

A model satellite township to house 8.81 lakh people, Rohini, which will provide accommodation for Delhi's growing industry, commerce and trade, is a true example of easing commercial crowding.

With Rohini, town planning enters a new era. The emphasis here is not just on putting roofs over families, but on providing facilities for universal elementary education, adult literacy, medical care, centres for social and cultural affairs, and provisions for developing industry, commerce and trade.

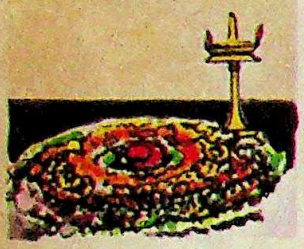
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This week for you

This week the stars foretell of travel. Of discovery. Of an exciting new culture. An enchanting land. Lucky dates 29 August-4 September. Favourable direction-South. More exactly, the South –West-Kerala.

For its Tourism Week time here. With events guaranteed to fascinate every sign of the Zodiac - be it the majestic Leo or the artistic Piscean.....



Athapoovu : Intricate floral design. Decorates the court-yard of every home during the festive season.



Kathakali : Ancient dance form in which costumes and make-up are of particular significance. Originally performed in the temple, it vivifies episodes from the religious epics.



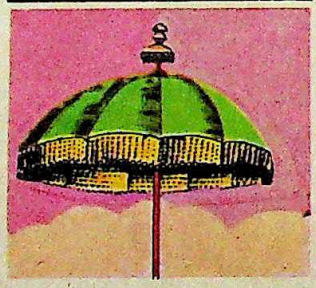
Snake boat races : Held on the Kerala backwaters and rivers. Spurring the oarsmen on to victory are the Vanchipattu, the traditional boat songs.



Caparisoned elephan Lending a touch of old w glory are the decorated elephants.



Ottam Tullal : A dance, satiric in style, performed by a solo performer.



Umbrellas : Gaily coloured umbrellas twirling in the breeze lend a festive touch.



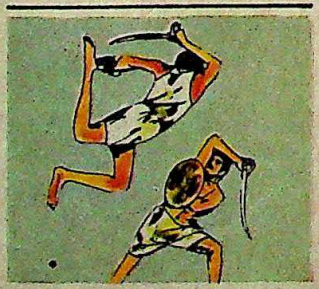
Theyyam : A dance performed to propitiate mystique deities and spirits.



Mohiniattam : The da the enchantress. Soft, ly movements are a typical



Kaikottikali : Folk dance performed by women in a group around a lighted lamp.



Kalaripayattu : Ancient Kerala martial art calling for lightning-fast reflexes.



Panchavadyam : Traditional Kerala orchestra composed of drums, horn pipe and cymbal.



Tourism Week: Kera it at its varied best durin Tourism Week, 29th Au 4th September.

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TOURISM WEEK 1982

29th August to 4th September

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A

nsient Glory



A FOLK hero overnight, the 33-year-old Sri Lanka hijacker, Sepala Ekanayake found his days of glory quickly as a light monsoon Mobbed by slogan-shouting at paid scant attention to the urity arrangements, pursued by hers, reporters and TV crews, the rded and singularly unimpressive came through customs with tri-ounds of "jayawewa" (*viva*) and ya" (our hero) ringing in his ears. toms he declared only $100,000 s reports had given the sum he om Alitalia as A body search oms produced f it.

hours later his petite Ita-nna Aldovanti ree" (short for moved into a m at the Inter-l. It proved to uspicious day tel which had pgraded to the el to be on par anka Oberoi. nded irony of ge advertise-ext morning ly be missed: presenting five-stars, the Inter- is ready to serve the most de-ients."

st demanding client meanwhile, g the first real sleep he had had an two days, more than 30 hours had spent on the Alitalia plane in irport as the lone hijacker who y with the most unusual ransom latter-day piracy. He wanted his ld son brought to him from Italy 00, but did not seem to be too about rejoining his estranged

ionment: Daylight brought him ent and heartbreak. Crowds fol- "hero" as he walked from bank all his money in a kit-bag. No nk was ready to do business. Bank of Ceylon accepted the informed him that an account for could be operated only after the " was okayed by the exchange artment.

He did a little shopping, buying himself a T-shirt which bore the legend "I am a genius, follow me". Back in the hotel, he was surrounded by six cronies while his wife was seen chatting with his older brother, a schoolteacher. The child was playing with toy soldiers on the carpeted floor. It was an incongruous scene.

At one point, as Ekanayake regaled his buddies in Sinhalese with stories of how he had been "king" for more than 30 hours and held 250 lives in the palm of his hand, his ego-trip was disturbed by the appearance of an international airline captain who took the table opposite him in the coffee shop.

Unknown to Ekanayake, trouble was brewing inside the hotel and outside it. If foreign guests did not take too kindly to a known criminal holding press conferences, flashing thousand-rupee notes and lording it over the hotel staff, airline crews checking in for overnight stays were incensed. The Sri Lanka police was furious but frustrated.



Ekanayake, his wife and son: an unusual ransom

Small-time Courier: Interpol had informed them that Ekanayake was a small-time courier for a European drug ring and had been arrested in Austria, Yugoslavia and Pakistan. But he had not committed any crime in Sri Lanka nor was he wanted for any previous crimes. This information had been passed on to Manel Abeysekera, Sri Lanka ambassador in Bangkok, who had played a key role in the airport drama together with the Italian ambassador and the Thai minister of communications, now is in evident trouble with the Thai press and in the Thai Parliament. Ekanayake was promised that he would not be arrested on arrival.

Yet the wheels of the Government were moving inexorably. The Italian ambassador told the Foreign Ministry that Italy would be asking for Ekanayake's extradition. The same evening, Trade Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali, the intellectual of the cabinet, told a public meeting that the Jayawardene Government was against "terrorism, local or international". The Government had obviously recognised the full implications of the issue at last and decided to act.

The Intercontinental management had by then informed Ekanayake that the guests had protested against his presence, and that he must leave. He took the news calmly and then as he walked towards the lift, he yelled back, "I don't give a damn for your orders." However, he left a few hours later with his brother and two friends. He was on his way home, to his village in the deep south. His wife stayed overnight with a member of the Italian Embassy staff. The next morning he was picked up by the police and produced before the Colombo magistrate on a charge of "retaining stolen property" and now remanded in Colombo prison.

Delayed Arrest: Explaining why he was arrested four days after his arrival, Foreign Minister Shaul Hameed said that the passage of laws drafted in accordance with the Tokyo, Montreal and Hague conventions on hijacking had been delayed on account of more urgent legislation.

Ekanayake's story took a truly tragic turn last week when Anna Aldovanti left for Rome with her four-year-old son "Free" (Freedom) a few hours after the District Court of Colombo delivered an order restraining her from doing so. The application was made by Ekanayake's lawyers who failed to serve the order on the immigration department and the airport authorities in time to stop Anna from leaving. "I do not want Free to grow up and be called a hijacker's son," she told reporters. She admitted that she no longer cared for her husband and joined him in Bangkok only to save the hostages. In a connected development, the Supreme Court, last week, discussed a draft law which makes hijacking an offence. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment. The Court will rule whether the law is constitutional or not. Ekanayake will have to be tried under a law having retrospective effect.

Ekanayake's attachment to his son has won him a million admirers. Besides, he is from the deep south, the traditional "tough guy" territory. In the past five years all the derring-do and the devilry, the headlines and the attention, have been the preserve of the militant young Tamils, traditionally regarded as a docile minority. "The south strikes back", wrote a columnist. And tongue-in-cheek, the Communist Party daily asked, "Wasn't Ravana, our great ancestor, the first hijacker?" —MERVYN DE SILVA in Colombo

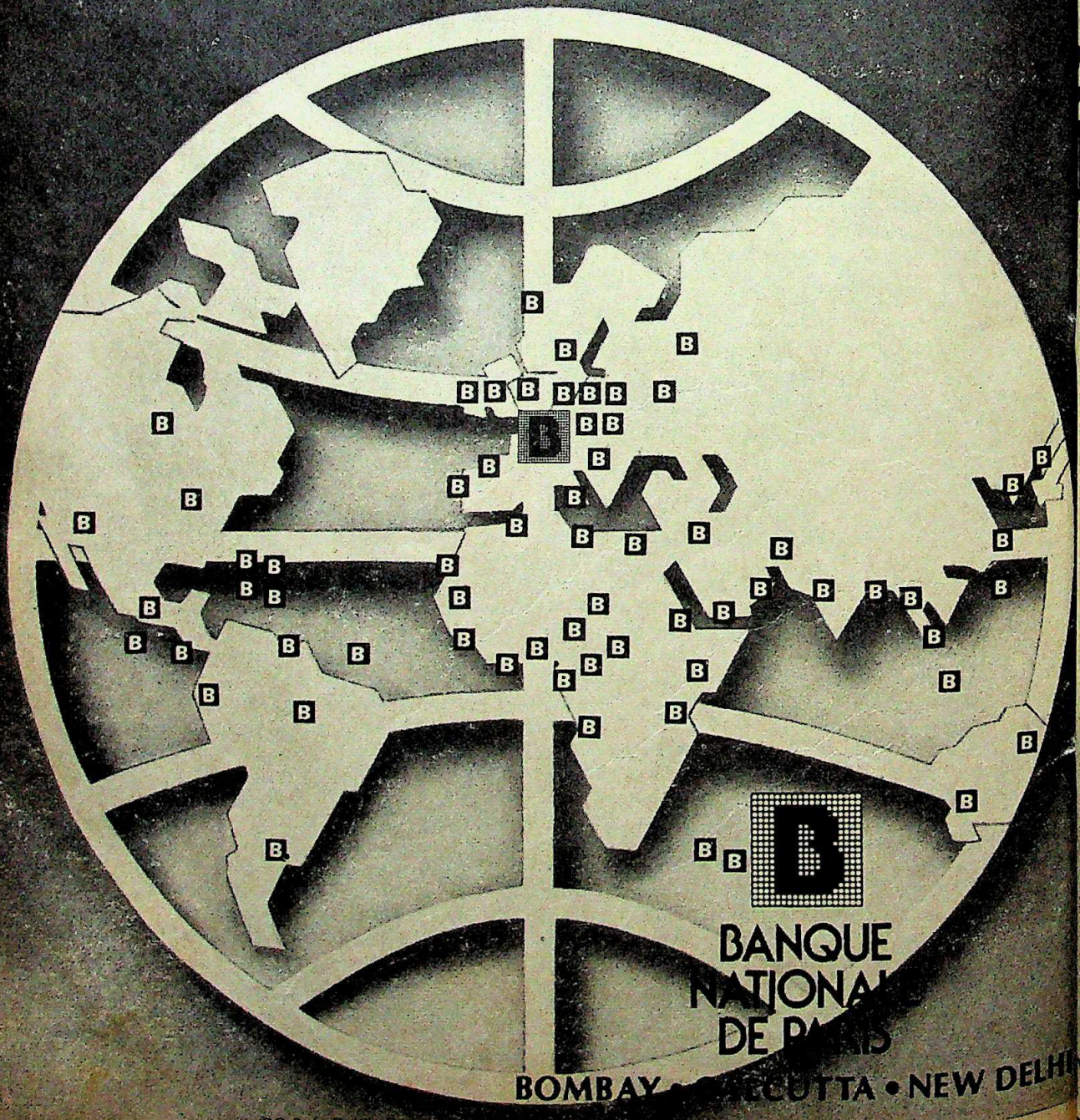
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For over 121 years Banque Nationale De Paris (BNP) has established in Indian and International business a unique tradition of trust, efficiency and friendly service. People in 77 countries look upon it as a pillar of financial strength and stability.



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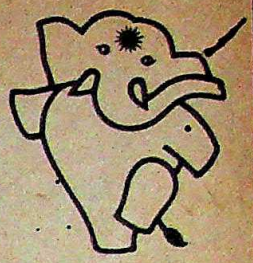
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The Asian Games are the only totally Pan-Asian sporting event that regularly involves all Asian countries on a scale increasingly rivalling the Olympic Games or the World Cup. The Games involve countries with a combined population of 2,303.9 million, 54% of the world's population.

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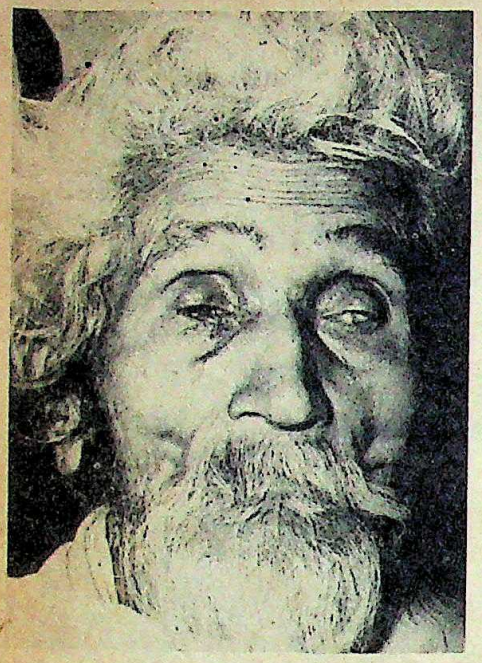
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Victims of quackery: dark futur

FAKE DOCTORS

Slashing At Sight

IT WAS, quite literally, an eye-opener. As many as 23 innocent eye patients have been blinded by quacks who operated on them with razor blades at the Rajkhera, Lalpur and Kheroli villages of Dholpur district of Rajasthan.

Though the blindings took place at Kheroli in late February, the official machinery came to know of it only last fortnight when one of the victims, Resham Aggarwal, 50, was admitted to the Dholpur Government Hospital with her eyes streaming pus. Government sources fear that many more may have been blinded by the quacks who are well organised and have been holding eye camps under various names. After the recent arrest of five of them, the police stumbled on a register maintained by the fake doctors. Its contents were revealing: they had held 39 eye operation camps since November 1978 and had operated over 1,100 patients. The police who claim to be conducting detailed investigations, have not yet gone into these villages to find out how many had been blinded.

Moreover, there are other quacks who have also been holding similar camps. The fact that the villagers did not complain of the detected cases is indicative that many more may be fated to live in darkness.

Crude Methods: Four and a half months after the operation Resham is still writhing with pain. The vision in her right eye had been defective for a long while. In late February she went to an eye camp organised in Kheroli and was overjoyed when the "doctor" told her: "Mataji, you'll see again." He took Rs 21 as admission fee and after the operation he demanded Rs 200. When contacted she told INDIA TODAY that her eye was scraped with a sharp instrument and bandaged. Ever since, she's been in pain.

All five patients who had been operated by these quacks had gone blind. None of them had gone to a doctor since they had lost faith in the medical profession.

Last fortnight, doctors at the Dholpur hospital were shocked to see the crude way in which her eyeball had been slashed and rushed to Kheroli after she told them of the camp. All five patients who had been operated by these quacks had gone blind. None of them had gone to a doctor since they had lost faith in the medical profession. The doctors had a tough time persuading these blinded victims to get themselves admitted for immediate treatment.

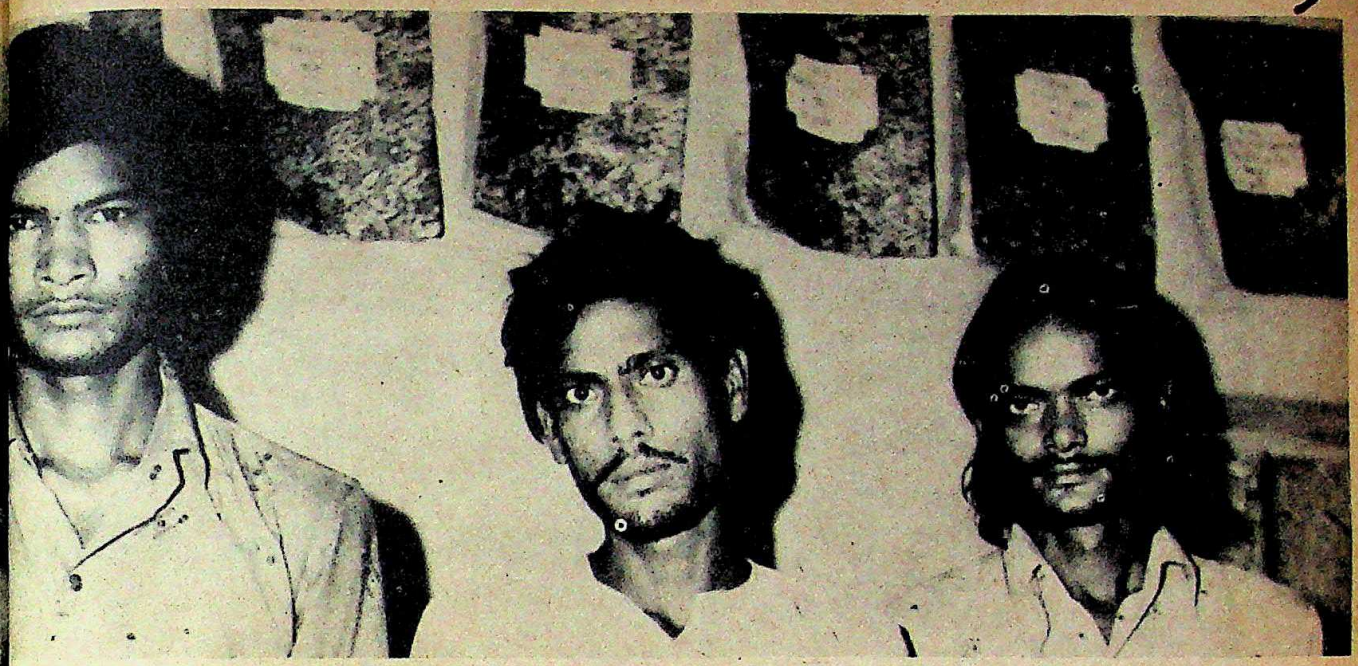
The quacks operate in remote villa Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh advantage of the illiteracy of the peop *modus operandi* is simple: they dis leaflets announcing a free eye ca distinguished eye specialists. The patie made to fill in forms which also signatures of relatives granting con the operation. The professional to evident. An admission fee of Rs 21 is before the operation. Though the ca supposed to be free, the quacks de amounts varying from Rs 150 to R immediately after the operation. In cases, they even threaten to deny me for post operative treatment if the m not coughed up, compelling n relatives to pawn their possessions in to pay. The quacks then instruct the p not to open the bandages for four day make good their escape.

The innocent villagers did not s the quacks even after they were to chemists that the medicines prescribe not exist. The eye drops administered just plain water mixed with red ink from razor blades, the quacks w instruments taken from dissection bo schoolchildren.

Greedy Quacks: The operators, ca away by the greed for money, went ar blinding helpless villagers, some of children. Said Sunil Darji, a 10-yea victim: "I wanted to see like a normal so that I could play with my friends." H been blinded after quacks scraped his co with a blade. Today, his world is a dark Said Pradeep Dev, collector of Dholpur is the most sickening thing I have ever

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(From left) Quacks Ramesh Tyagi, Munnalal Jatav and Mahesh Tyagi: taking advantage of the illiteracy

o crush this massive racket. With
of five quacks, we have only
he tip of the iceberg."
lpur, some quacks who are abs-
operated on 17 patients in early
ne of them, Sukhia Jatav, 67, was
from ascitis (water in the abdomi-
). The quacks who pretended to
s at general sur-
rmed a stomach
. A fortnight
died. According
agers at Lalpur,
tions were per-
by "two men,
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e quacks made
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e head and ban-
em. Out of the
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ost their vision
A pathetic case
aran Singh, 70, of Lalpur. Doctors
Dholpur hospital had to get his
eye removed as it was becoming
usly septic. Longshri Thakur, 60, of
could only see with her left eye.
e quacks got at her, she is totally

e Awareness: Ironically, the police
are of the blindings but took no
heir excuse: no complaint was lod-
he event, it was a genuine doctor,

Dr Chandrakant Arora of the Dholpur hospital, who filed a complaint. The police then arrested five quacks who had operated 15 eye patients at the Rajkhera camp, blinding 13. "Dr" Mahesh Tyagi whom the leaflets describe as one of "the best" eye surgeons, was found to have merely completed high school. He worked as a helper in an Agra dispensary at a salary of Rs 70 a month till two years ago. He then started organising eye camps in the villages of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan along-with his brother, Ramesh Tyagi and a friend, Munnalal Jatav, both school drop-outs. They were joined by Babulal Bhagela of Agra and Radheshyam Gola of Aligarh, who were earlier compounders in private clinics. Pleaded an unrepentant Tyagi: "We are doing a public service. So many of our operations have succeeded."



Operation tools: instruments of torture

What is surprising is that the police has not yet bothered to investigate the villages where, according to records seized from the accused, operations were held in the last two years. The Deputy Superintendent of Police at Dholpur, Ranjit Singh, maintained that the police are conducting a thorough inquiry but could not disclose why enquiries had not been made in villages where eye camps were held by the arrested quacks. Said Pardyuman Singh, state home minister: "I do not know why the police has not gone to investigate into the numerous villages. But, they will soon. We are after the culprits."

The people of Dholpur are understandably incensed with the police inaction in tracing the culprits. Yugaldas Baba, 58, a freedom fighter, said: "Most of us know that money is being used by the culprits to dilute the case." His statement was echoed by numerous others. Commented Pardyuman Singh: "No charge of corruption has been made to me and I can take action only if a formal complaint is made." Tragically, most of the victims will probably never complain. As one of them said apathetically: "What is the use of complaining. It will not help us to see again."

—RAMESH MENON in Dholpur

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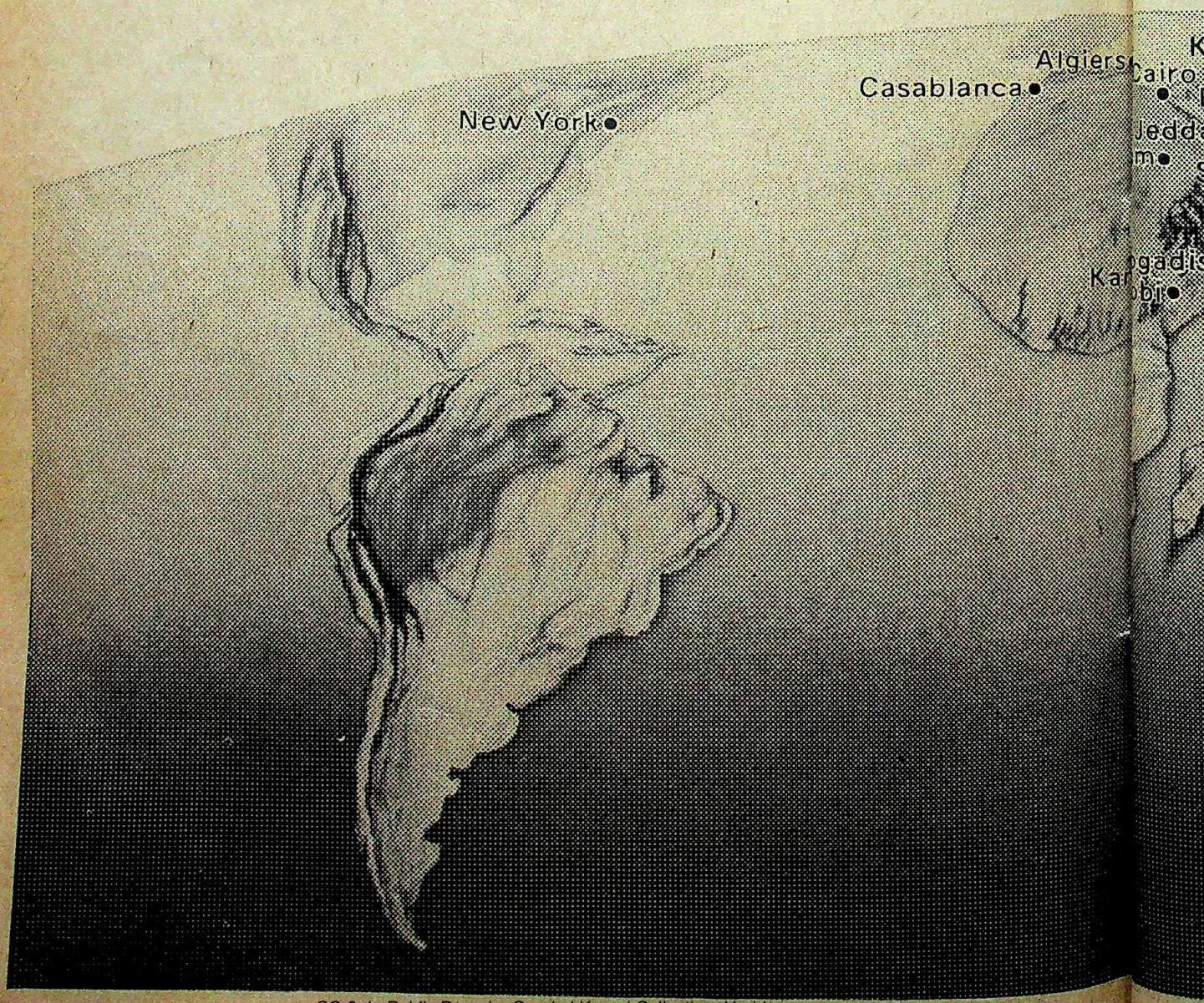
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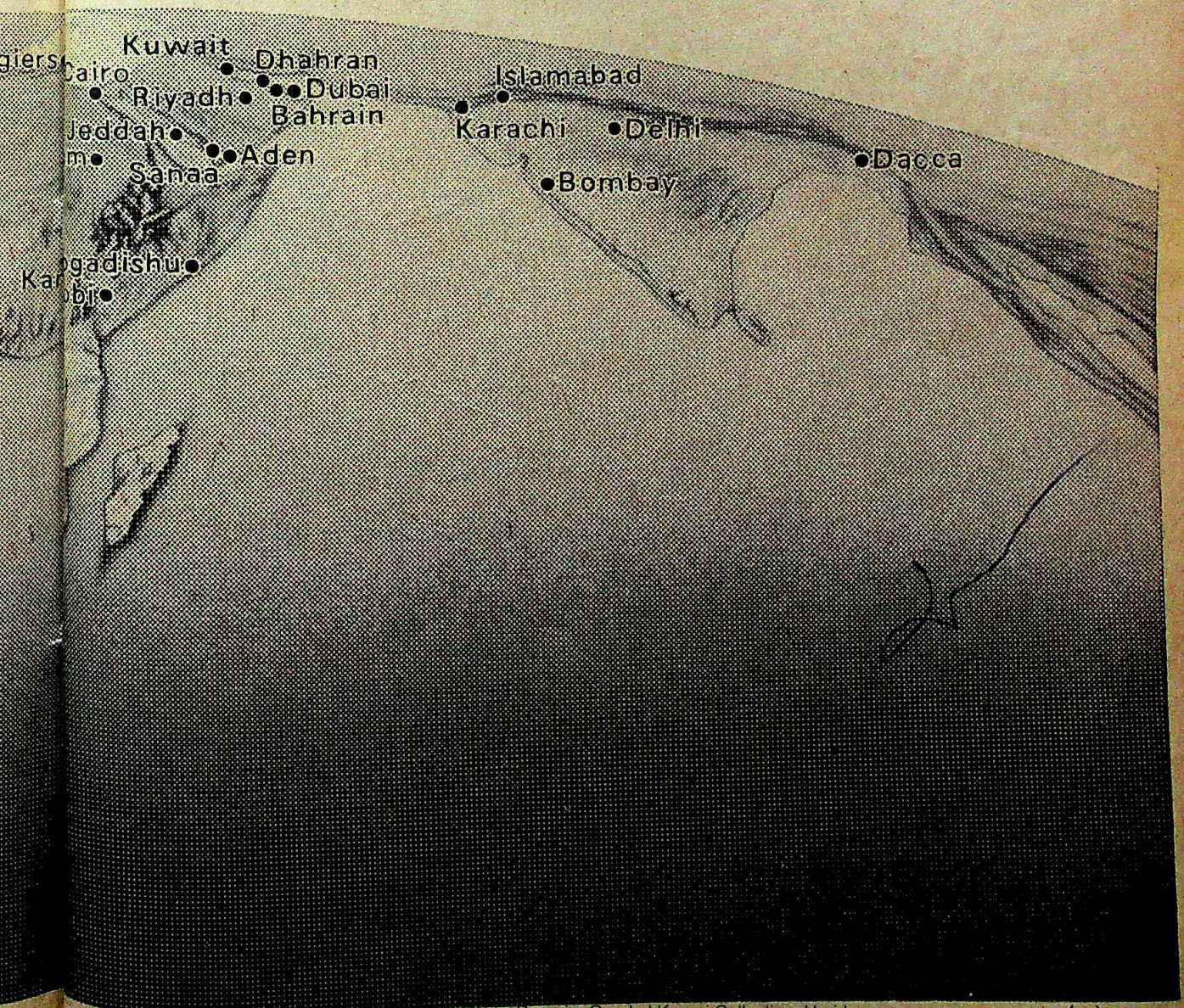
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INDUSTRY

The Growth Kings

IT IS not a record to be proud of: in the decade of the 1970s, Indian industry grew by a paltry 4 per cent a year, put repeatedly to shame by upstart countries with less to offer in terms of the basic building blocks of industry: good men, money and natural resources. Dropping steadily in global rankings, struggling gamely to gain some momentum, India's industry has remained trapped in the mire of restrictive policies and the lethargy of an economy unable to realise its true potential.

Perhaps the cards weren't there, or they fell all wrong. But in the midst of this supremely lack-lustre record, there are also those who have consistently turned up trumps: the growth kings.

Seventeen years ago, Dhirubhai Ambani was hawking imported yarn to a textile industry on the decline. Today, he heads a textile unit that is set to rank as the fourth largest private sector company in the country. His growth has been mind boggling: from sales of Rs 13 crore in 1972 to Rs 302 crore in 1981 and possibly Rs 435 crore just one year later. The average annual growth rate has been a scorching 41 per cent till last year, and he will have multiplied sales a breath-taking 33 times in just one decade.

The Modis, operating out of a backwater near Delhi, have blazed their own trail in a host of industries, multiplying sales eightfold in as many years, and are ready now to treble investments in another five years. Moving swiftly up the ladder of industrial rankings, the group has effectively combined a policy of setting up new ventures in a wide range of industries, with expanding existing units and acquiring such prominent companies as Bombay Tyres and Godfrey Phillips.

Runner-up: Only slightly less impressive, the automotive giant Escorts, started by H.P. Nanda, has multiplied sales six times in nine years, and now hopes to treble again in four years, moving up in effect from Rs 42 crore in 1972 to Rs 750 crore in 1985. Already market leaders in tractors and motorcycles, Escorts will now be expanding both lines as well as its production of excavator-dumpers, and also moving into harvesting combines, outboard motors and cars—virtually everything that moves on wheels or has an internal combustion engine.

Down south, an unknown Mangalorean, Vittal Mallya, has emerged from the shadows as the country's liquor king, beer baron and processed foods tycoon, all rolled into one. Stalking the stock markets ceaselessly for likely prey, Mallya has virtually had a fresh company for breakfast each new year, and now surveys an empire with major global aspirations. Moving in at every stage of the liquor business, Mallya has easily outpaced his chief rival, Mohan Meakin, which had a headstart on him when he started operations.

Ambani, Nanda, the Modis and Mallya: they have their differences in style, substance and goals, but in essence they personify vintage entrepreneurial skills, industrial dynamism of the highest order and an emphatic assertion of what is possible in any environment, given the will. Undeterred by the mood of frustrated despondency that has held back numerous others, all four have invested in optimism, exploited every business opportunity that came their way, created others where none existed, and surged ahead while others fell behind, st their successes on an otherwise larg gettable industrial decade.

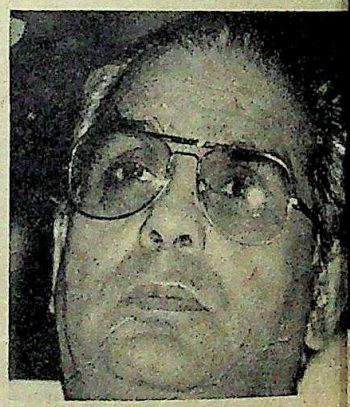
August Company: They are no ever, alone. Others too have done cre the Sarabhais, the Singhanias, the M the Thapars, and the TVS gr Madurai—all recording around 20 annually. And in Pune, Rahul Baja what is now the world's second scooter manufacturing company and only serious entrant in the global in sweepstakes. Starting around the sa as most two-wheeler manufacturers country, Bajaj has consistently led the product quality, market acceptanc waiting lists of up to 12 years), production (at 200,000 scooters, thr his nearest rival), exports of Rs 1 (selling abroad more than some riv

DHIRUBHAI AMBANI



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HARI PARSHAD NANDA



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at home), and profits (the highest the lowest-priced scooters). He is quadruple sales in five years if the nt allows him to expand capacity nt he wants.

have these growth-hungry tycoons to move consistently up the gewnhill path? Which well-springs e have they tapped for their steard thrust?

mmediately obvious fact is that single success formula. Ambani ted trading profits into industrial become the country's biggest tex- beginning just as much from allya has deployed the country's for chinks in the serried ranks of eet figures to acquire companies in lines of interest; the Modis have n the industrial levers in an agush for the best technologies and s of opportunity; and Nanda has standing industrial capital out of wing trend towards farm tion.

Modis have grown in a host of entirely unrelated industries, ranging from cigarettes to tyres, and from synthetic fibre to sponge iron, believing essentially in setting up new units in greenfield sites.

•

IN CONTRAST, H.P. Nanda has kept Escorts in its chosen area of specialisation: various sectors of the automotive industry. Vittal Mallya has been a sick industry specialist, buying up floundering companies and turning them around quickly. And Ambani has followed the logic of integrating production facilities backwards along the process chain from weaving to spinning and now from yarn to basic raw materials. There are, quite obviously, many roads to Rome.

Each has followed the logic of his own situation. Nanda, running Escorts singlehandedly till his son began to help, has kept all his operations under one umbrella. The more numerous Modis have proliferated in terms of corporate entities as well. Ambani, again, has just one company, while Mallya operates through an intricate network of cross-shareholdings by his various companies.

Even in educational backgrounds, the growth kings have little in common. Rahul Bajaj is an MBA (Master of Business Administration) from the Harvard Business School, but Ambani's only education has been at a village school in Gujarat. Nanda runs his engineering conglomerate with an ordinary Bachelor of Science degree, but almost all the younger Modis have impressive technical qualifications.

Genealogy: However, blood seems important. The Modis are Marwaris, as is Bajaj. Ambani belongs to a small but successful trading community in Saurashtra, which might explain his savvy trading skills. And Mallya's financial wizardry could be linked to his Mangalorean community, which has produced numerous successful bankers.

However, the most vital personal ingredient for success is, quite simply, motivation. "Running a business presents enough day-to-day problems," says K.K. Modi, vice-chairman of the Modi group. "And it is easy to sit back and say this much is enough, why should I ask for more headaches. But you grow only if you welcome fresh challenges and headaches."

Hari Shanker Singhania, head of the JK Singhania group, makes the same point in a different way in explaining the reason for his group's steady growth over the years. "We have always been optimistic about the future of the Indian economy. When others saw only the licensing difficulties, the shortage of funds, or political uncertainty, we always stayed optimistic about the future, and planned for it."

Motivation: Often, the motivation is inbuilt—as in the case of Rahul Bajaj, who is at the top because he wanted to be there, and because he wants to aim at bigger goals abroad. But others have been goaded into success: S.K. Modi, who heads Modi Carpets, recalls how both he and his elder brother, V.K. Modi of Modi Rubber, left home more than once in protest at the relentless pressure put on them by their demanding father, Gujar Mal Modi, the founder of the group. "There are people in our own family," says S.K. Modi, "who did not get this treatment. They are the ones who have not proved themselves as much as the others."

All the growing industrialists display an open and over-riding commitment to growth, and have repeatedly proved their business acumen and what management consultant Naaz Rovshen terms "the ability to perceive a business opportunity and seize it". Often ruthless, even unscrupulous, the growth kings display an awareness of new trends and opportunities, and the willingness to work for success—none of them has any real interest other than his work.

R NATH MODI



he Modis, operating of a backwater near hi, have blazed their n trail in a host of dustries, multiplying les eightfold in as any years, and are eady now to treble estments in another years, moving swiftly up the ladder of industrial rankings.

VITTAL MALLYA



He has emerged from the shadows as the country's liquor king, beer baron and processed foods tycoon, all rolled into one. Stalking the stock markets ceaselessly for likely prey, Mallya has virtually had a fresh company for breakfast each new year.

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If they are conscious of their strengths, they are equally importantly aware of the reasons why others have lagged behind: the Lalbhais of Gujarat failed to move out of a declining textile industry, and have dropped in the rankings of the top 20 industrial houses; Lalchand Hirachand of the Walchand group failed to give young blood its head, and the group dropped out of the top 20; the Shriram group has been wracked by internal differences, and showed virtually no growth until a younger generation recently started to try and make up for lost time; the Associated Cement Companies, another important large house, got stuck in cement when it was unprofitable.

Quality Products: Many fell by the wayside because of indifferent quality products—and if there is a common thread running through the otherwise widely varying strategies of the growth kings, it is the stress on excellence and quality. Mallya markets most of the premium brands in liquor and the best-known brands of various food products. Ambani's Reliance produces high-priced textiles that sell even in a recession because of their quality. Escorts has the most sought-after tractor in the country. And if V.K. Modi was able to give the entrenched market leaders a hammering with his Modi tyres, it was because he produced better tyres. Says Rahul Bajaj: "I am dedicated to excellence, not to making money. It is dedication to excellence that brings you profits."

In a tightly controlled economy, managing the Government has been another key prop for growth. "No group can grow without government help," says K.N. Modi, "and this is true whichever government is in power." Modi's group has specialised in working around government restrictions, and—coincidentally or not—benefited the most from an excise concession for tyre manufacturers. Ambani has gone even further: all his windfall profits have resulted from working the nuances of the import-export policy to maximum gain. And he has moved ahead with fresh industrial licences while—again coincidently or not—his rivals' proposals were held up.

Increasingly for the growth kings, tax planning is becoming another powerful engine for growth. Reliance has excelled in never having paid taxes on profits in recent years. The Modis are similarly planning for a no-tax growth policy. And JK Synth the fastest growing company und Singhania umbrella—expects to pay for the next few years, claiming dedu in half-a-dozen different directions exempted investment allowance at cent of the cost of new plant and mach 50 per cent faster depreciation on new ines installed, exemption per cent of profits new investment, an 20 per cent of the profits years on a new projec backward area. Rajan of Escorts admits that has gone in for a Rs 22 floating dry dock merely der to avoid paying ta profits—a floating dry could be bought quickly, setting up an industrial p which takes time. In th most other projects, a su tial chunk of project capit in effect, been contribut the Government—and o capital base, industrialist borrowed more from the to finance whole projects

Exception: Mallya out as an exception t trend. He shows no incl to start serious tax pla nor does he appear to s tions with the Governm being very important. alone among the large lomerates, he maintains son office in New Delhi, ing to operate from Bangalore or overseas.

The opening of lic and other windows is nov ing a new wind to blow th government corridors. Li are easier to come by, project finance. And an policy on imports and collaborations has growth less of an obstac The growth kings are no ing the rush into new ment. The Modis, with a barely Rs 300 crore, no fresh investment of Rs 60 in five years. Escorts pl treble turnover in four And Ambani, with Rs 179 worth of projects under mentation, further plans diate investment of R crore. Bajaj plans to Rs 100 crore in steppi capacity 150 per cent. Singhania plans to sink

RAUNAQ SINGH



H.S. SINGHANIA



RAHUL BAJAJ



M.S. OBEROI



B.M. MUNJAL



"Men like Raunaq Singh, M.S. Oberoi, Munjal of Hero Cycles and others prove the central point that there is a fund of entrepreneurial talent which has produced wealth out of nothing. The growth kings are a symbol of what has been done, and what is possible."

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n less than two years.
the Tatas, sluggish growers for
s, have been caught in the new
id growth began suddenly after
sales mounting from Rs 1,368
78 to an estimated Rs 2,600 crore
gigantic projects are now planned
generation, fertiliser, steel and
Telco is soon likely to become the
irst Rs 1,000-crore company. By
p sales will go up to Rs 3,500
faster growth ahead as some of
plants achieve full capacity

DIA's biggest industrial house,
is also the best example of
difference that government po-
de. Through the '60s and '70s, one
e application after another was
by the Government: proposals
ster plant, a fertiliser project, an
ant and a medium-car project,
oval for a power project was
delayed.

If government policies have been a hindrance, they have also been a big help. Licensing restrictions have often prevented free capacity creation, effectively giving a free run to those who have moved in early and got in on the ground floor. Domestic industry has also been protected from any worthwhile competition from those who set the pace internationally, so that the Government has in effect given Indian industrialists a pocket borough for happy hunting.

Perhaps the only one among the growth kings to actively seek competition with global leaders on their terms has been Rahul Bajaj. "Being No. 1 in India has no great meaning, I want to go global," he says. And so, advertising himself as the world's second largest scooter manufacturer, he moved bravely into exports, setting up assembly operations in Indonesia and Taiwan, scooters in the US and Europe.

But Bajaj is now proving a classic case-study of what happens when an Indian industrialist ventures in a big way beyond his protected shores. His erstwhile collaborator, Piaggio of Italy, saw the danger and slapped on law suits in the US and Germany, charging Bajaj with having copied the original Vespa scooter. When a third case was threatened in Britain, Bajaj decided it was safer to hold back. Now he has been served with legal notices in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Meanwhile, his Taiwanese partner has walked out on him, and the Indonesian partner has said he cannot sell the scooters in Jakarta any more because Bajaj's model is outdated. Bajaj himself has been conscious of this for some years, and has been trying to get fresh collaboration agreements with any of the leading two-wheeler manufacturers abroad. But no one will touch him because he is too big, and too dangerous. Instead, they are now signing collaboration pacts with Bajaj's rivals in the home market, aiming at the root of his strength. In desperation, he has now gone to an independent design firm in Italy for designing from scratch a lighter, more fuel efficient, more aerodynamic veh-

RANKING

Numbers Game

WHAT is growth? asks Rajan Nanda, 40, president Escorts, much like
us Pilate, and goes on to dismiss
vernment's preference for measur-
size of industrial houses by their

K. Modi, 36, of the Modi group, is
contemptuous of this method:
stocks pile up because your goods
selling, so your assets increase, and
overnment says you have grown.
stupid." Modi would like to have
measured by changes in sale,
is the method used by the US
ss magazine *Fortune* to rank cor-



G.D. Birla boosting figures

giants.
e Government's stress on assets
o odd situations. Some years ago,
Birla wanted apparently to show
group was bigger than the Tatas,
valued the assets of the two com-
directly under his control:
tan Aluminium and Gwalior
That promptly shot up the Birlas'
total assets and took them to first place in the asset rankings!

Other groups have gone through similar exercises for different reasons: the Sarabhais, as a part of the formalities for dividing the group's companies into separate spheres of influence for different family members, revalued some of their assets and therefore recorded the fastest growth rate in 1979 and 1980. Most industrial houses, however, prefer to value assets by historical cost rather than current replacement value, thereby often vastly understating their real economic size.

Differing Figures: The Tatas have played their own games, understating size domestically while revealing their real strength elsewhere. In 1979, the Government estimated the group's assets as Rs 1,309 crore, but in December 1979 an advertisement released by the Tatas in the Paris-based *International Herald Tribune* claimed assets equivalent to £1,300 million (Rs 2,340 crore). A domestic furore followed, and Tata assets mysteriously disappeared: a subsequent advertisement in the London *Economist* claimed assets last year of only £550 million (Rs 1,000 crore)!

At the lower end of the scale, companies deliberately understate their assets in order to stay below the Rs 20 crore figure, since if they cross that they come under the restrictions of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act.

But the problem with measuring growth through sales is that turnover figures invariably include excise duties, which vary vastly for different products. So a heavily taxed cigarette company will show sales roughly four times its net-of-tax sales, and move up sharply in the charts. All too often, growth in sales also reflects little more than inflation and price increases, so that the growth reflected in the figures is entirely illusory.

Profits, the third indicator commonly used, could be equally misleading



J.R.D. Tata: disappearing assets

because of ingenious accounting practices that inflate or deflate profits. Says K.K. Modi, 42, vice-chairman Modi group, with a laugh: "Foreign businessmen who come here keep asking me how it is that the companies which show poor profits are often the fastest growing."

So, what indeed is growth?

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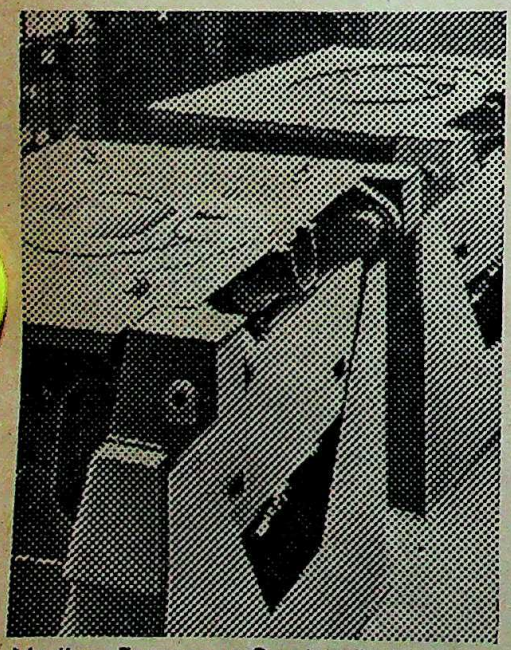
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take on the new competition at broad.

tions: Ironically enough, Bajaj een better able to fight his battles ernment had allowed him to lier to Japanese economies of licensing as well as price and rols have invariably retarded ore industries, and the men in a often chosen to move in to newly areas free from controls: or instance.

made garments barely qualified industry 10 years ago. Today, ute the second largest item of n India at around Rs 550 crore. ooming growth has spawned a tion of millionaires, men like a of Intercraft in Delhi. Or, in people like the Vachani brothers shed out established companies d Nelco (Tatas) to make their troniks the biggest producer of ectronics items.

down the industrial ladder, g enterprises have shown the es of business acumen and lea- have catapulted the growth udden prominence. The Shree ss Works has pushed sales up onsequential Rs 2.75 crore in 5 crore in 1981—a 28 per cent th rate that outdoes the Modis. aspati making unit now moving ics, has grown from Rs 4 crore Rs 62 crore today—an annual of 22 per cent that's faster than ecord. Brij Mohan Munjal of is yet another case, rapidly ell-established rivals to become leader in bicycles, and then ming a leader in mopeds as well. bhai Ambani is an outstanding- first generation industrialist, ers like hotelier M.S. Oberoi Singh of Bharat Steel Tubes. 45 years ago as a shop assistant e store, Singh, 63, now heads e group and plans to invest Rs projects ranging from ships to ord.

nd other cases prove the same that there is a fund of entre- ent which has produced wealth ng in an often discouraging Says H.S. Singhania of the n foresight, risk-taking ability neurial skill, I don't think we less than the Japanese. It is stion of whether we can make ent." In that sense, the growth mbol of what has been done, ossible.

with CHANDER UDAY SINGH, RAJ CHENGAPPA and bureau reports

DHIRUBHAI AMBANI

Streaking Up The Ladder

DHIRUBHAI Ambani's story is the stuff of which best sellers are written. Entering the sagging textile industry in 1966 with a miniscule investment of Rs 28 lakh, Ambani's Reliance Textile Industries Ltd is today set to become the largest textile unit and possibly the fourth largest among all industrial companies in the country, yielding precedence only to such vintage ventures as Telco, Tata Steel and Hindustan Lever.

Streaking up the industrial ladder at the accelerating speed of a rocket taking off, Reliance's sales have risen from Rs 13 crore in 1972 to Rs 302 crore in 1981, and are projected to touch Rs 435 crore this year.



Ambani: quick off the mark

Ambani has blitzed the textile industry with his advertising campaign, conquered all consumers with the quality and range of his cloth, and become the rage of the stock market by offering returns on investment beyond anybody's wildest dreams.

Totally self-made, Ambani was born 49 years ago to a schoolteacher and his wife in the tiny Gujarati village of Chorwad, near Porbander. He was given a rudimentary education before he left home at the age of 17. Though he has grown shy of admitting it, he worked for the next eight years as a clerk in an Indian-run import-export firm, A. Beesee and Co. Having picked up the intricacies of international trade, he returned to Bombay in 1958 to set up a small export firm, Reliance Commercial Corporation.

Using his export replenishment licences to import polyester yarn, he cashed in on a widespread shortage to make his first killing on the market: imported polyester yarn sold in the Bombay market at premiums ranging up to 300 per cent. By 1966, the dark, slightly stooping yarn trader was ready to make his foray into industry. Reliance Textiles was started with two circular and two warp-knitting machines, and Ambani was in business. The rest is history.

Tried Strategy: Sticking to the now familiar export markets, Ambani continued with his two-pronged business strategy: exports fetched him replenishment licences which he used to import yarn that sold at a premium and assured the company huge profits. These trading profits were ploughed back into manufacturing, and Reliance grew.

The high unit value scheme, begun in 1971, provided a fresh fillip. Under this export promotion scheme, exporters of nylon fabrics were given larger-than-normal import entitlements against which they could import either polyester or rayon yarn. Ambani moved in quickly, stepped up production and exports, and collared up to 60 per cent of the import entitlements. Imports on the basis of these entitlements earned him fresh premiums of between 300 and 500 per cent, going up at times to 700 per cent, giving the company a sustained thrust into the ranks of the big league.

"I don't know why I am criticised for doing this," Ambani says defensively. "These entitlements and licences were available for everyone to take advantage of. If they were not quick enough off the mark, is it my fault? If there is a profit to be made in some scheme, I am not going to wait for a written invitation to take advantage of it."

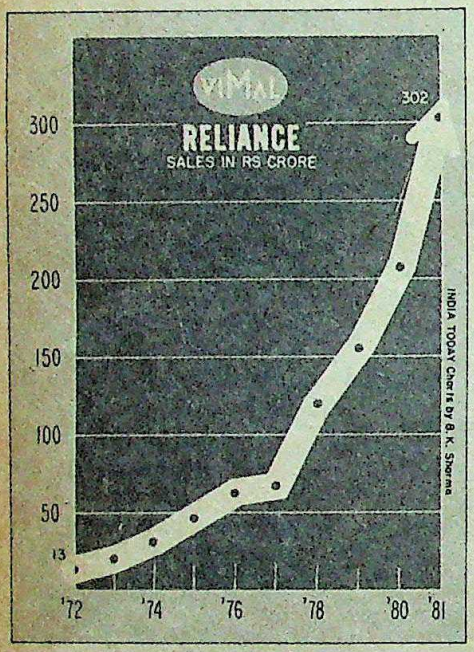
With profits ploughed back yet again as investment capital, Reliance by the mid-'70s was a force to reckon with in the synthetic textiles field. And at the man-made textiles fair in Bombay in 1976, buyers from abroad

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were so thoroughly captivated by Reliance's smother-all selling strategy that a majority of the sales at the fair were booked by Reliance. Buyers were met on arrival by Ambani's men, given limousines and attendants, wined and dined almost continuously, and taken to Ambani's budding textile plant at Naroda, near Ahmedabad.

With its public issue of shares in 1977, Reliance entered a phase of high-profile growth, even more impressive than its earlier record. Crowed Ambani in his speech at the Reliance annual shareholders' meeting last month: "Over this five-year period the company's equity capital has gone up by 180 per cent, sales by 351 per cent, gross profit by



608 per cent, gross block by 685 per cent, and reserves and surplus by 1,119 per cent.

Stranglehold: More is round the corner. A Rs 80-crore project comes on stream next month to churn out 10,000 tonnes of polyester filament yarn annually. Before that plant is even ready, Ambani has applied to the Government for stepping up capacity to 25,000 tonnes. If the licence comes through, as no one doubts it will, the master-strategist will have a stranglehold on yarn once again, since all his competitors put together will have yarn capacities of no more than 10,000 tonnes.

Moving further back along the chain of processes that result in synthetic textiles, Ambani now plans a 1.5 lakh-tonne PTA plant, which will provide the basic raw material for yarn production. And as the next logical step, he will move into chemicals, using the by-products of the PTA plant. These will give Reliance a firm diversified industrial base, and make it less dependent on profits from yarn sales than ever before.

Ambani is the original man in a hurry, determined to achieve more in his lifetime than successive generations of competing industrialists. Forward planning stretches seven years into the future, even when licences hang in the balance. Only two years after the share issue in 1977, Reliance had its first issue of debentures to finance a worsted spinning plant. Every year since then, there has been a fresh debenture issue: in 1980 to finance loom modernization, in 1981 for the yarn project at Patalganga, and in 1982 a record Rs 50-crore issue for further expansion and modernization at Naroda and Sidhpur.

Projects are invariably finished in record time. Six months after receiving his licence, the worsted spinning plant was in operation. Eight months after licensing, the Sulzer looms were installed. And exactly a year after signing a collaboration agreement with chemicals giant du Pont, the filament yarn project will start production.

Life-style: For a man who has achieved so much so quickly, Dhirubhai Ambani works a surprisingly short day: never more than 10 hours. "Anybody who says he works a 16-or 18-hour day is either a slow worker or a liar," he pronounces with glee. Surrounded by stockbrokers, yarn merchants and wholesalers at the Oberoi health club in Bombay every evening, Ambani has the ritual "jet massage" at the end of his working day, is picked up in his golden-brown Cadillac right afterwards and rushed home to his wife, two daughters and a son (his younger son is studying business management in the US), with whom he spends every evening. He is no socialiser, travels only when unavoidable, and leaves the foreign jaunts to a string of intensely loyal and increasingly professional managers.

Assessments of the man vary from the adulation of his shareholders to the continuing scepticism of his critics who maintain that he cannot possibly maintain his dizzying pace, and even that the bubble, if such it is, could burst. Rival textile magnates point to Ambani's dependence on yarn sales even today for most of his profits, and complain about how he has twisted official policy around to suit his needs and put down rivals.

A more balanced judgement came from a Bombay industrialist: "He combines a very Indian understanding of money and trading with a very modern understanding of industry, marketing and technology."

Ambani himself is supremely confident of the future, points to financial ratios and predicts that he will be in a position for another quantum leap ahead very soon. "It's all common sense," he says with a smug chuckle.

MODIS

Phenomen Growth

TEN YEARS Modis brought in the list of t industrial hous country. Two they ranked 10t and by the end of this year they move up to third place, behind the





The Modis: (from left

Birlas. In 1974, the group's sales 106 crore. This year, the figure wil crore.

This phenomenal growth achieved by what is without q most aggressive industrial family ntry. Headed by Kedar Nath Mo brother of the founder, Gujar Ma group now controls a clutch of 23 with a vastly diversified range o The group's strength lies in num second generation Modis whom refers to as 'my cabinet'. While chairs his 'cabinet' sessions on g and project clearances, virtually second generation Modi has la own successful venture.

Armed with outstanding a cords from technical institutes, ideas, and conscious of the cru tance of technology, the second Modis have built rapidly on the laid 50 years ago by Gujarmal M head the most rapidly expandin country's large industrial house

Krishan Kumar Modi, among the eight second genera members, launched the grou sionary phase with a yarn project in the mid-'60s. Then Vinay K floated Modi Rubber in 1974 beat well-entrenched companies and Goodyear to move to the to market. Satish Kumar Modi flo Carpets, and now Umesh Kum setting up a sponge iron project

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hile Yogesh Kumar Modi is
austic soda plant in Rajasthan.
on their earlier successes, the
ow surging further ahead: two
ompanies with multinational
ay Tyres (formerly Firestone)
y Phillips (makers of Four
ettes) were acquired last year,
going into cement, K.K. Modi
an products, and S.K. Modi
p a Rs 130-crore fibre plant. A
national presence is marked by
s to set up a thread plant in
synthetic yarn plant in Nigeria,
ke-over of a tyre unit in Ghana.

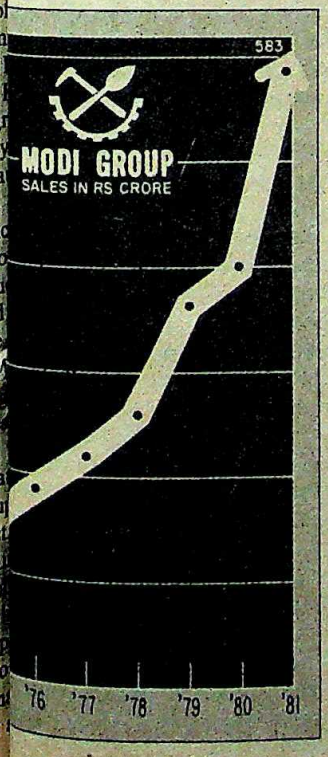
ng Investments: Overall, the



Vinay Kumar, Satish Kumar, Bhupendra Kumar. and Umesh Kumar

to invest a staggering Rs 600
next five years. Kedar Nath
ates that he will be able to
27 per cent annual growth in
projected the group skywards

ath-taking pace is the result of a
ed on roping in the best tech-
he biggest names in each field:



Xerox for reprographics, Phillip Morris for cigarettes. Courtaulds for fibre and Blue Circle for cement (all four conglomerates being among the world's biggest in their respective fields). The group has often discarded project proposals because it could not get the chosen foreign collaborator or the desired technology.

Building on this technological strength, the Modis have stressed quality, aggressive marketing and an often audacious tax planning policy. While the group has concentrated essentially on floating new ventures, its managerial strengths have been most visible in the ease with which it has turned around floundering companies that it has taken over. When it acquired Bombay Tyres last December, the company had been incurring losses for two years. But in no more than six months production has been raised 50 per cent, and the company is making a profit again.

How did they do this? B.K. Modi explains: "We moved from a six-day to a seven-day week and ignored holidays, so the year now has 360 working days instead of 290. Power was a problem, so we have installed generating sets. I have shifted from rayon to nylon tyres to get 30 per cent added value on the tyres, and some obvious production bottlenecks on the shop floor have been removed. The results are now there for you to see."

A similar turn-around is planned for Godfrey Phillips (which produces Four Square, Red & White and Cavendars Magnum cigarettes), now run by K.K. Modi.

"I think this is the growth area of the future," he says. "The economy has been growing steadily, and people now have the money to buy the things they like." This is the logic behind the move to bring Christian Dior into the country.

More than anything else, what has egged on each individual Modi to give off his best is a sense of competing with his brother or cousin. Says 31-year-old U.K. Modi: "What is true for our managers is equally true for the members of our family. Either we prove ourselves or we perish." So far, the majority of them are far from perishing.

VITTAL MALLYA

Empire Builder

HE IS not quite India's Howard Hughes, but comes close to it as the shadowy and elusive figure behind dozens of the most commonly used household products. At 57, Vittal Mallya is virtually unknown to the public and would pass unrecognised even in a gathering of businessmen. He operates from behind an almost impenetrable curtain of secrecy, and details of his operations are hard to come by.

For all that, Mallya is today the indisputed king of the beer, liquor and processed foods industries. His stable of companies include United Breweries, McDowell and Carew, he has a virtual monopoly of the market for squashes, jams, lime juice cordial and ketchup (owning both Kissan and Dipy's), commands 75 per cent of the domestic pesticide market (Finit), and heads companies that turn out Singer sewing machines, Cadbury chocolates and some of the most commonly used drugs (Hoechst and Roussel).

Buying up companies with a voracious appetite and an unerring eye for the right stocks to pick, Mallya has built up his estimated Rs 250 crore to Rs 300 crore empire from scratch, and now has over 30 companies under his umbrella, taking in products ranging from batteries to polymers, and from plantations to paints.

His stock market raids on unsuspecting companies have come to be feared, and right now Mallya is in the thick of two battles over bids to acquire Spencer, the southern hotel and marketing chain, and J.L. Morrison Son and Jones (India)—producers among other things of Nivea cream.

Early Start: The son of an army doctor, Mallya started as early as in his final year at Doon School, when his nightly habit of pouring over balance sheets earned him a poor passing-out grade. While still at college in Calcutta, Mallya was already dabbling in shares, and was soon making the money for bigger operations. His first acquisition, McDowell, came at 24, and United Breweries was in the bag two years later. Moving to Bangalore in 1952, Mallya started a steady acquisition of small breweries and distilleries. New breweries were established in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Bihar. By the early '60s, Mallya gained further control of the liquor

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market by acquiring Carew and Phipson (the latter a major liquor distribution company), followed in the early '70s by another distribution firm, Herbertsons.

The real test of his business acumen came in the mid-'70s, when an official prohibition drive sent the breweries and distilleries into a tailspin. Mallya showed his foresight by buying up or gaining control through management contracts of yet more breweries (Premier, Jupiter, Punjab and Indo-Lowenbrau) and distilleries as others sold out in the face of a market slump. In the process, he finally pipped Mohan Meakin to the title of beer and liquor king. Last year, he produced 38.3 million litres of beer and 20 million litres of liquor.

In a shrewd move, meanwhile, Mallya moved into the hops business—hops being a crucial input for beer. Mallya first got the Kashmir Government to give him two acres on lease to start a nursery, and now distributes hops seedlings to Kashmir farmers and buys up all their produce—giving him effective control of the beer industry's most vital ingredient. At the other end of the liquor chain, he owns the leading liquor marketing companies. Though these distribute rivals' products as well, Mallya is clearly in control at both ends of the business chain.

The simultaneous move into food products started with the acquisition of Kissan Products in 1962. When Herbertsons was pocketed a decade later, Mallya also bagged its Dipy's division, giving him a virtual stranglehold on a series of processed food products.

Foreign Partners: Most of his other business operations have been in tandem with major foreign principals. In 1956, he jointly with Hoechst AG of Germany and two other Indian partners, promoted Hoechst Pharmaceuticals, gradually increasing his shareholding to 48 per cent and becoming chairman of the company. Four years ago, he also became chairman of British Paints with the help of Hoechst AG, which had earlier acquired British Paints' parent company abroad, the Berger group. Then through Cadbury Schweppes, international associates of Kissan Products, he moved on to the board of Cadbury India, to become its chairman a few years later. And taking advantage of disinvestments by multinationals, he has in recent years become chairman of the Indian Sewing Machine Company and Malayalam Plantations (the large tea and rubber company), and also a director of Bush Boake Allen.

Mallya's associates say he has moved into these companies only to study their working processes, but it seems only a matter of time before he acquires controlling interest. This, after all, is the way he has built most of his empire.

Two other important acquisitions in recent years have been Hindustan Polymers (taken from the Shriram group) and Mysore Electro-Chemical Works (makers of MEC batteries).

Today, Mallya controls 10 breweries and 14 distilleries, seven processed food companies, six investment companies, two small packaging units, three drug firms, soft drinks bottling plants, a battery unit and one of the company's two styrene companies, while heading a handful of other companies even though he does not have controlling interest.



Vittal Mallya (right) with his son Vijay: Midas touch

The turnover of Vittal Mallya's major companies	1980-1981 (Rs crore)
United Breweries	118
McDowell & Co	
Herbertsons	
Carew & Co	
Kissan Products	
Mysore Electro-Chemical Works	
Hindustan Polymer	
Phipson & Co	
Mysore Wine Products	
Hoechst Pharmaceuticals	57
Roussel Pharmaceuticals	12
Also chairman of:	
Cadbury India	33
Indian Sewing Machine Co	18
Malayalam Plantations	25
British Paints	28

The strategy of growth through acquisitions underlines Mallya's basic business asset: financial wizardry. "He can see through any balance sheet in five minutes," says his banker, and others testify that he can merely look at the figures and decide whether the company is ripe for a take-over.

But Mallya is also very much the sick unit specialist, the industrialist with the Midas touch, producing often memorable managerial successes after taking over floundering companies. Every brewery he has picked up in recent years has been turned around by pumping in money to modernize machines and then getting it to manufacture his popular brands, Kingfisher and UB Lager. In food processing, Dipy's was a sick unit which ran for less than four months in the year. Now, despite operating in a al industry, Dipy's works at full cap 10 months. Mysore Electro-C Works has doubled production t charge. "We have never had a dud on our hands," boasts M. Sreeniv executive director of United Brew Mallya's right-hand man.

Big Plans: In Bombay recentl Vijay Mallya launched a new cola, McDowell proposes to introduce wide a comprehensive range of so cola, orange, lime/lemon, bitter le soda and tonic water. A major for is planned through a internationa that operates out of Singapore, ready runs Century Foods, a ma Plans have been made to move in distillery-brewery-food beverages Uganda on a management con might lead to a take-over. Joint ve also planned in and South-east A fields Mallya kn beer and liquor. A spends more tim than in the countr

Business riva him with revelli unethical practic liquor industry, mising profits b whisky from mo tead of malt—t process allegedly cent of the latte resultant whisky harmful to health name was also year to the then tra chief minister lay's controversia on alcohol supply lya's employees regard for professionalism, his quality, his willingness to give plenty of elbow room and his sc clean business practices.

Mallya's almost obsessive privacy has made him as fascina business operations. For all of liquor empire, he drinks but spa ferring to be a workaholic. Man birth, he lives simply, drives his work though he owns a Mercede neither refurnished nor carpete office.

Almost wilfully, he stays pretentious hotels, preferring to Akbar in Delhi even if he has function at the Maurya Sherat nevertheless "very pucca" (as per the son of a doctor-colonel in the army), but rarely socialises, pref stead to read—balance sheets, m

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he t Lane

WHEN Hari Parshad Nanda, 65, started hawking tractors around the villages of the Punjab 40 years ago, his customers often filled water into the fuel tank and diesel in the radiator, arguc ile logic that fuel should be the inlet near the engine. Nanda ood-humouredly, looking back s, conscious that as the farmers er he himself has grown from beginnings, and that he now h largest company in the private

Ltd is now the leader in the ggest four-wheeler industry— s also the biggest producer of , the only supplier of some equipment for the railways, the biggest producers of ex- pers.

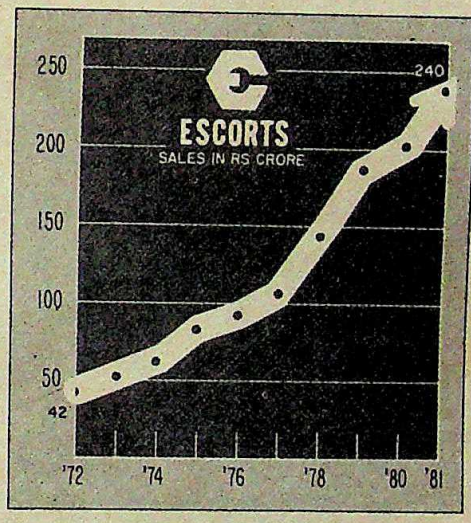
plans suggest steadily growth: tractor capacity is to go ,000 to 34,000, two-wheeler 60,000 to 200,000, piston rings 12 million to 20 million, and one million to two million. pment production is to double he next three years, going from Rs 24 crore by 1985. Investment been made in a Rs 22-crore dock, and major entries are electronics, outboard motors harvesters. Nanda now plans all by going into cars, in with Daihatsu of Japan.

st nine years, Escorts sales have fold, from Rs 42 crore to Rs is will quickly treble now to Rs 1985, a handsome compound h rate of 33 per cent. "So far it olidation; from now it will be ," says Rajan Nanda, P. Nanda's son and president ny.

to Escorts' rapid growth has sation, which is good not only ations but also for profits and ompany buys 82 per cent of its onents from ancillary units, has to make only a small part tment required to expand t of the investment is made by s. "If I add to my tractor 000, I get back my investment s," says Rajan.



H.P. Nanda and son Rajan: ready for new activity



Perfect Strategy: Ancillarisation has also been the perfect strategy for generating funds for investment: all sales are against cash, but the company gets 30 days' credit from suppliers. Result: most years the company does not need to go to a bank for working capital, and in fact has a credit balance. That saves crores in interest charges: money that can be invested for growth. The increase in tractor capacity from 20,000 to 34,000 will be financed entirely through the company's own funds.

Attention to quality has been another investment in growth. When the company first turned out Rajdoot motor cycles, they were probably the poorest machines on the road. But while other motor cycle manufacturers have sat on their haunches, Escorts has constantly improved its product, adding a new Japanese carburettor for extra mileage and ironing out other technological wrinkles, so that the company now sells as many motor-cycles as the other two manufacturers put together. This lead in both technology and sales will increase now, when Escorts rolls out its first Yamaha motorcycle, later this year.

Growth has been easier for Escorts, says Rajan because the company has stuck to its area of specialisation. "For many of my products, I am trying to reach the same customer, using the same dealer network, and profiting from the existing staff expertise."

Nanda also says the company's effort has been to grow technologically, not just in assets or sales. "Joint research effort is now one of our priorities," he says, referring to programmes being worked out in the field of bio-mass management and fresh applications for the basic power-packs being manufactured currently. Another technological thrust is into windmills, and the proposed move into electronics is yet again indicative of an awareness of the importance of high-technology areas.

Nanda in fact strongly disapproves of growth purely for tax reasons, though he admits that his company has gone in for a Rs 22 crore floating dry dock essentially in order to avoid paying tax on profits. "But this is because the way the Government has shaped its tax policy," he argues.

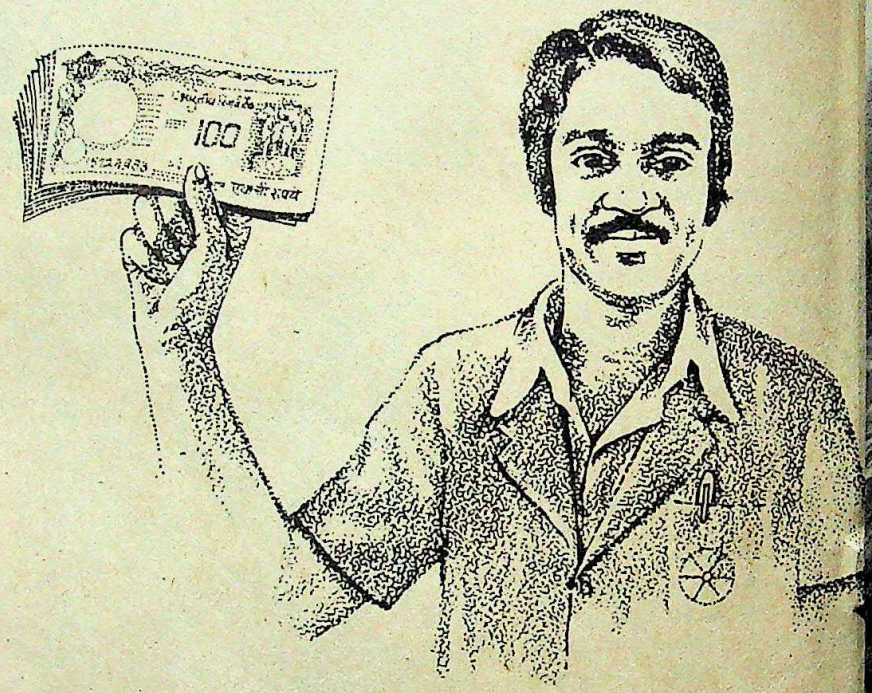
Getting the organisation ready for the new scale of activity has been Nanda's major concern since he became president and his chosen vehicle is decentralised decision-making: "We delegate powers to the extent that our managers feel lonely or ambitious. It makes them performance-oriented."

Now commanding substantial market shares in both tractors and two-wheelers, and ready to move into developing areas like cars, harvesting combines, outboard motors and heavier lines of excavator-dumpers, the Nanda father-son duo could well be crowned the country's automotive kings.

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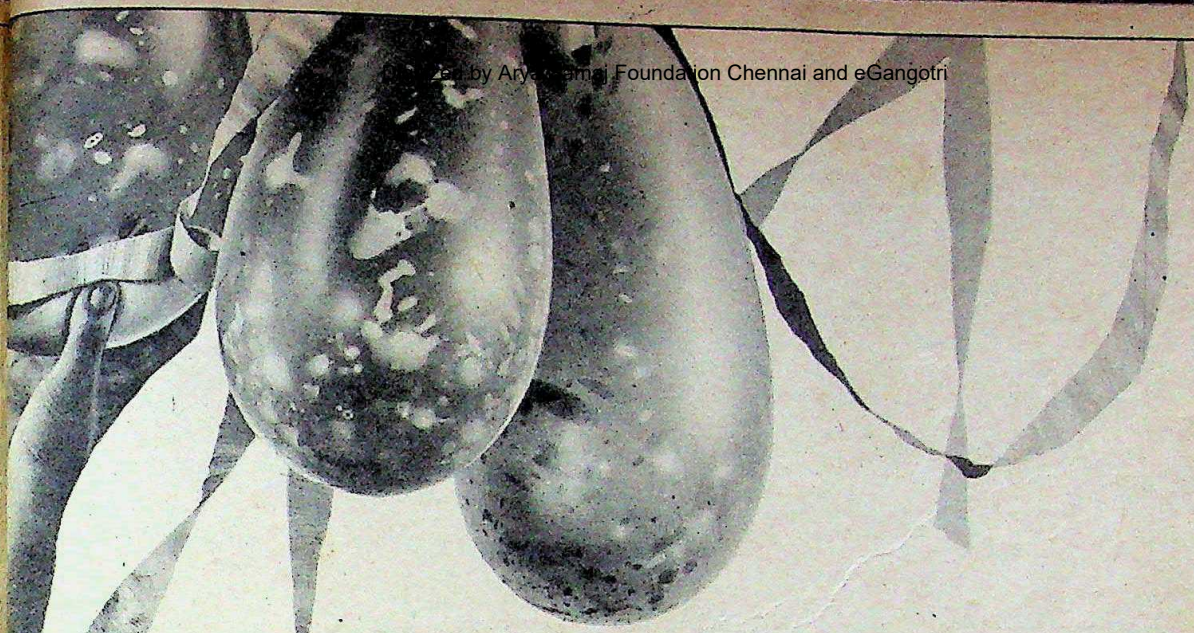
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toothpaste and mouthwash in one

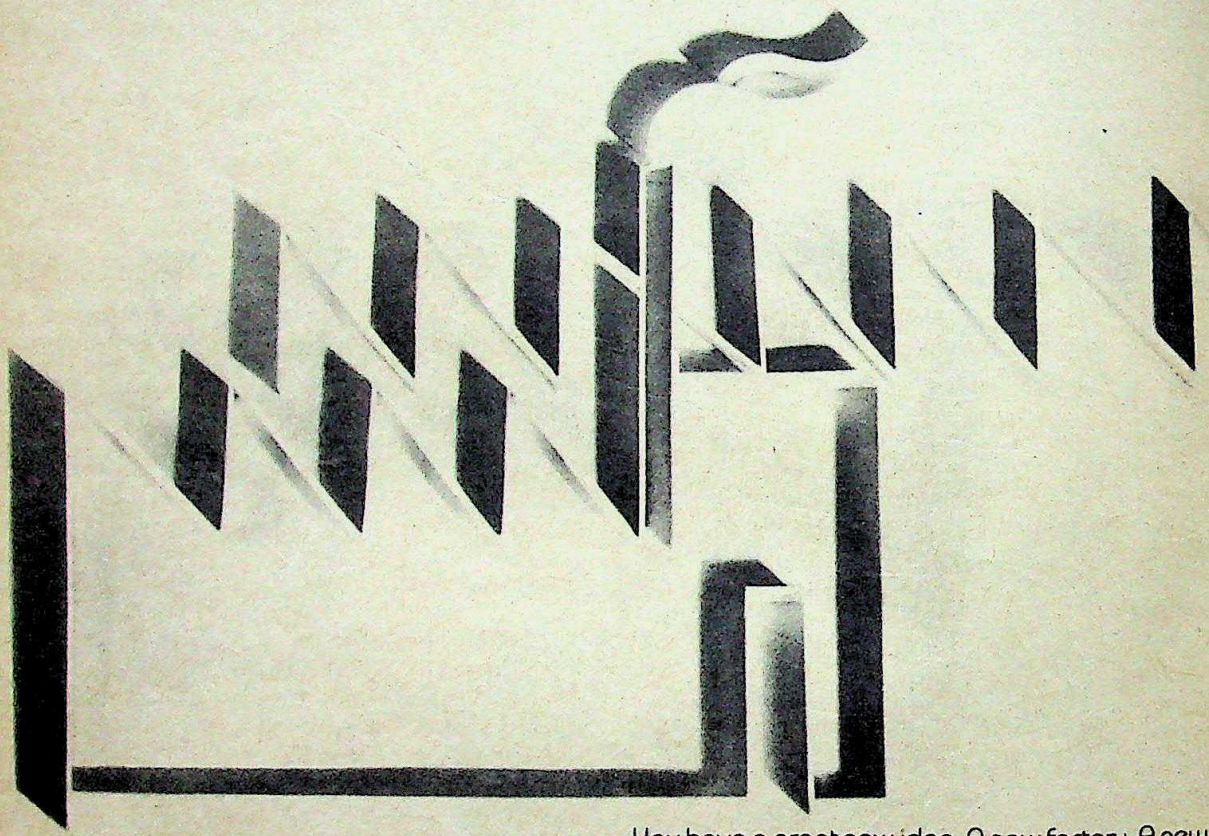
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NETTING THE BIG FISH

THE GOVERNMENT has ordered an inquiry by the investigation cell of the Income Tax Department into the tax concessions enjoyed by large companies. This follows the preliminary results of a study of 250 large companies, which shows that these companies pay an effective tax rate of only 40 per cent, against the minimum nominal rate of 57.75 per cent. The large companies are able to make use of a number of tax concessions offered by the Government, so that effective tax planning by these companies saves them large amounts of tax. It is estimated that the annual loss to the exchequer on this account could be anywhere between Rs 500 crore and Rs 800 crore for the 1,600-odd large and medium-sized companies in the country. It was pointed out to the prime minister that this sum is greater than the subsidies on food or fertiliser, which have been criticised for being a heavy drain on the budget. Despite a formal look at the concessions, however, there seems little possibility of their being withdrawn, given the Government's overriding concern with getting industry to use the tax incentives for growth.

HE LIMITS

RNMENT has decided to give more elbow room to trolled companies that come under the Foreign lations Act (FERA). The Rs 5 crore limit on internal RA companies will be waived, provided the FERA ved sells the product of a sick unit, small-scale lic sector concern. The limit was imposed in the first e Government did not want FERA companies, which erbearing marketing strengths, to indiscriminately ced by others, specially since profits earned on such repatriated abroad, costing the country foreign objective is now being made to subserve the broader ing sick, small-scale or public sector units that find it heir products. In the first approval about to be given y, a FERA company will sell items produced by the tor concern Andrew Yule. Other companies are now h in on the new policy.

RES

hering for two years, the Government has finally veto the suggestion by Parliament's Committee on kings for appointing MP's on the boards of public es. There are now only two MP's on the boards of ses: Charanjit Singh (Indian Airlines) and Arun Udyog). Neither is likely to be disturbed immediately net's decision and a circular that has been issued to takings. But the policy has been laid down firmly ernment does not want a repetition at the Centre of ned in the states: MLA's who cannot be included in inisters are invariably given sinecures as heads of prises and institutions. Charanjit Singh had in fact be trying to become chairman of Indian Airlines, s now been occupied by Russi Billimoria.

EADLOCK

TIATIONS for turnkey contracts with British in- sortia continue to be dogged by problems. After the both Indian and British negotiators are moving £450 million Rihand super-thermal power station s has not prevented the British from claiming that an ent of India guarantee is not sufficient for the export orked out to finance the project, and that the Government will have to bear the premium cost of insuring the loans involved. The cost: anywhere between £20 million and £30 million. The Government has told the British that its guarantees have always been good enough for all creditors, and that it has no intention of paying for any insurance charges, particularly in the light of its excellent international credit rating. But some amount may eventually have to be paid.

A second problem that has cropped up involves customs duty on the imported equipment. The duty is estimated to total Rs 212 crore and would shoot up capital costs, so that generation cost may end up as high as 50 paise per unit. In order to keep the project viable, the Government is now faced with the option of waiving customs duty.

ONE FOR THE ROAD

THE MODIS are thinking of moving into the truck industry, in collaboration with Volvo of Sweden. Unlike four other companies who are planning to produce light commercial vehicles (3 tonnes and under), the Modis are thinking of going in for heavy trucks. The group estimates that despite the expansions now under way at TELCO and Ashok Leyland, there will still be a vast untapped market because of the likely failure on the part of the railway to expand fast enough to meet growing freight traffic demands. An increasing share of total freight has been moving by road, and the Modis estimate that this trend will accelerate in the future. Talks with Volvo are still in the preliminary stages, and it will take a couple of years before the project gets seriously under way. But stiff competition clearly lies ahead for TELCO and Ashok Leyland.

GOLDEN HANDSHAKE

THE PUBLIC sector Hindustan Steelworks Construction Ltd (HSCL) may finally be about to solve its long-standing problem with over 5,000 surplus workers at Bokaro and Bhilai. A scheme now being worked out proposes to offer the unwanted workers a golden handshake that could involve up to 15 years pay being offered in return for voluntary retirement. The reasoning is that even such a generous settlement will work out cheaper than keeping the workers on the rolls indefinitely. A parallel solution being considered is to retrain some of the workers in useful trades. The problem with offering a golden handshake is that it cannot be selective, and the more valuable workers from among the surplus ones may opt to leave. If a way is found to get around this danger, this could be the first case of a public sector concern offering such large numbers a generous, golden handshake.

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Trawlers in Neendakara harbour: non-starters

FISHING INDUSTRY

Trawlers At Sea

"INDIAN fish are the only fish in the world that die of old age" is one of the more popular one-liners circulating currently in India's fishing industry. The humour, however, is definitely of the gallows variety and is an overt indication that, after four years of battling through typhoon-type weather, India's fishing industry is doomed to be a non-starter. There is, however, no better indicator of this than the frantic rate at which the large industrial houses that optimistically entered the waters four years ago are pulling out and writing off their not inconsiderable losses.

In early 1978, the Ministry of Agriculture proudly informed Parliament that 13 large industrial houses had sent in proposals for import or charter of trawlers. Of that number, six—Hindustan Lever, Delhi Cloth Mills, J.K. Chemicals, Rallis India, Brooke Bond and Wimco—scented the way the ill wind was blowing and disentangled themselves before getting too heavily involved. Two more—ITC and E.I.D. Parry—withdrew soon after while of the remaining five—Britannia Industries, Union Carbide, Tata Oil Mills, New India Fisheries (Thapar Group) and Konkan Fisheries (The Chowgule Group)—most are in the process of reeling in their operations.

Predictable Reasons: The reason, tragically, is all-too-familiar: short-sighted and hamstringing policies by the Government, inordinate and totally unnecessary delays in the decision-making process on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture and the relentless increases in fuel costs. A recent confidential survey undertaken by one of the industrial houses that is planning a face-saving pull-out spells out in grisly detail the manner in which an industry with tremendous scope and potential has been systematically strangulated. The report, portraying the



state of the industry, makes for depressing reading. The major depressants are:

► India does not possess a single deep sea fishing vessel operating commercially. All it has is 57 coastal vessels;

► Not a single coastal vessel has been added to the fishing fleet in the last four years;

► In 1977, the Government ap import of 79 fishing vessels. N arrived;

► Indian fishing remains c territorial waters and has not ev into the 200-mile Exclusive Eco (EEZ);

► India's yearly marine catch on the decline as is the expor products; and

► Foreign fishing vessels are purloin over half-a-million tonn resources each year from India.

Inevitably, the crux of the in the usual bureaucratic bu government organisations inv way or other in fishery developm a total mockery of an administration and coordinatio there are five organisations Ministry of Agriculture, three the Indian Council of Agricultu (ICAR), one under the Ministry o and another three that owe the to the Department of S Technology.

Viewed from another ang currently six Union ministr involved with fishing while a Department of Heavy Industry staked a claim for associati questionable fortunes of the fish The confusion does not stop t research and development have their own vessels and ca own surveys, which means tha their functions overlap but vary wildly.

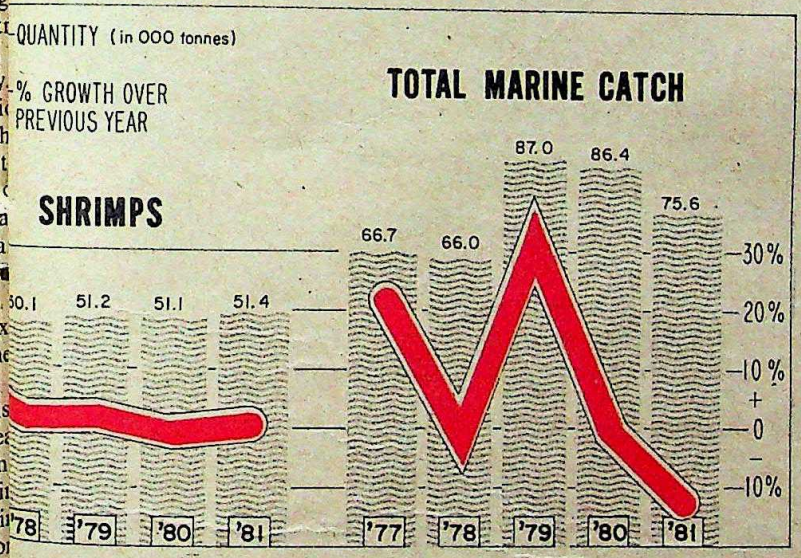
Differing Figures: One ex differing figures put out by the Agriculture in its Handbook Statistics (1981) and those is Central Marine Fisheries Rese (CMFRI), the organisation en collecting the statistics. Duri ministry's figures for the landi Kerala is shown as 52,300 to total for the country as 55,300 t however, puts the correspondi 7,276 tonnes and 13,620 tonnes In 1979, the ministry's fig threadfin catch in Tamil Nad tonnes and the country's at while CMFRI puts it at 3,530 to tonnes. Obviously, the minist highly inflated figures to paint but purely cosmetic, picture.

Even the Sixth Plan docum a host of misleading stat instance, it states that the "com sea fleet consisted of 55 ves additional 50 vessels operated basis." Industry figures revea single "deep sea fishing vessel country and the vessels me

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shrimpers while not a single on charter hire in India at the er, the document states that a pment Fund has been set up cial assistance. To date, not a been utilised from the fund. der then that Indian marine emained stagnant over the ntly are on a dismal decline. figure stood at 1.2 million it registered a negligible rise tonnes and by 1980 it had 1.2 million tonnes. Further, vas culled from the country's So far, none of the companies ng has entered India's EEZ. In rms. the percentage growth sh catches is way down at the international ladder. For ntage growth rate between stood at a niggardly 0.8 per ared to Pakistan (54.7), 20.0), Sri Lanka (33.6) 3) and Indonesia (84.1).



: In India, it would appear, home. Thanks to the weak- the Ministries of External nce, fishing vessels from the pan, Thailand and Taiwan fish in India's EEZ and take estimated catch of around nes. Food and Agriculture 80) figures for one type of are revealing. In the three- 5-1977, non-Indian Ocean total catch of 5,104 tonnes dia's EEZ, and even that is y conservative figure. Government's estimate of l yield in Indian territorial ez is pegged at 4.5 million ewer than five independent different parameters, have ential yield at between 15.5 million tonnes and 60 million tonnes, against the actual annual catch of 1.2 million tonnes.

Just one example of government policy indicates precisely why. The crews of the Exploratory Fisheries Project under the Ministry of Agriculture are governed by Civil Service Rules, which means that they only work between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. As one industry source quipped: "If only Indian fish could be trained to be caught between office hours, the fishing industry would have no problems."

Misplaced Priority: But room for levity is strictly limited. The Central Board of Fisheries, the highest policy-making body in the country as far as fisheries is concerned, presided over by the minister for agriculture, has met exactly thrice in the last six years, which gives some indication of its sense of urgency. Other instances of governmental apathy and befuddlement are myriad. The Ministry of Agriculture constituted a committee for development of deep sea fishing in 1979. It has still to produce its report.

The Commerce Ministry appointed a task force in early 1981 to arrest the decline in India's marine exports. Its recommendations include incentives for production, promotion of deep sea fishing, diversification, charter policy and fish farming—all subjects which come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Department of Science and Technology, not to be outdone, constituted an Expert Panel for the Living Resources of the Indian Ocean in March 1981, but the panel died a natural death after two inconclusive meetings.

The confounded confusion is, however, better illustrated by the innumerable anomalies in the question whether fishing is an agricultural or an industrial activity, a question to which the Government itself seems to have no answer. For instance, according to the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) Act, fisheries form part of the "marine products industry". Yet a 1.5 per cent cess on the freight on board (FOB) value of all marine products exports is collected as "agricultural cess". In Plan documents, marine products are classified under agricultural commodities while fisheries are lumped together with animal husbandry and bracketed under agriculture and irrigation. Meanwhile, profits from fishing companies are taxed as those of industrial undertakings and not as agricultural income (which is tax-free).

Naive Policies: Only one state, Kerala, has enacted legislation governing fishing activities. But it is naive to expect states to control fishing vessels operating in territorial waters or the EEZ and also in the waters of another state. Additionally, even though fishing comes under the Ministry of Agriculture, the basic legislation to cover the activities of fishing vessels continues to be the Merchant Shipping Act of 1958, administered by the Ministry of Shipping and Transport. The result is that the syllabi for examinations conducted for qualifying as skipper of a fishing vessel do not contain anything related to fishing or fishing operations. In fact, the Indian Fisheries Act of 1897, which is still in force, does not even recognise the existence of fishing vessels.

Against that background, it is hardly surprising that pretty soon there may be no private operators left among the large industrial houses—the only ones with the resources and infrastructure to exploit deep sea fishing commercially—unless drastic measures are adopted. But the Government is not wholly at fault. The large industrial houses failed to take into account the sharp hike in fuel costs during the '70s which upset their financial calculations. They also appear to have placed all their bets upon the lucrative shrimp market, which constitutes 68 per cent of the total marine exports. The shrimp catch has, however, proved disappointing, and last year it registered a growth rate of 0.6 per cent over 1980.

However, industry spokesmen are undeniably justified in demanding certain major changes in basic government thinking such as: a national fisheries policy; a comprehensive legislation for fisheries which will also embrace a separate ministry for fisheries like many developing countries have introduced; a clear-cut policy for charter as well as joint ventures; provision of adequate facilities like communications; the deepening of existing fishing harbours and the establishment of a fisheries corporation for deep sea fishing. Unless some of these measures are implemented, the industry like the Government's policies on the subject, will be totally at sea.

—DILIP BOBB

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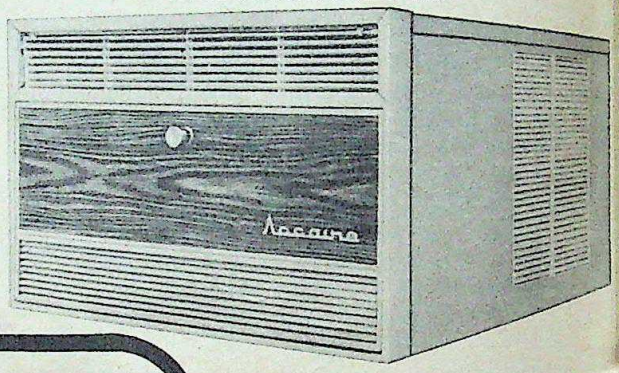
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To be efficient you must be coo

ACCO understands



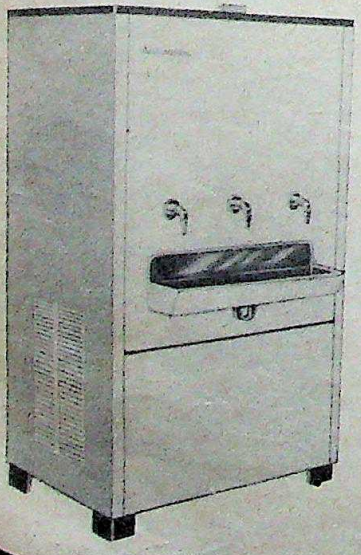
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OPERTY

cturing The Balloon

ASONABLE rates; payment y cheque; loan facility offered." he last time residential flat mbay were offered terms like nost six years ago, when the threat to black market oper- he bottom out of the city's real . But last fortnight, in a surpris- last year's scarcity situation in rtisements touting "full cheque re becoming increasingly com- les had slumped to an abysmal ces dropped rapidly from the ted levels of a year ago (INDIA 1-15, 1981).

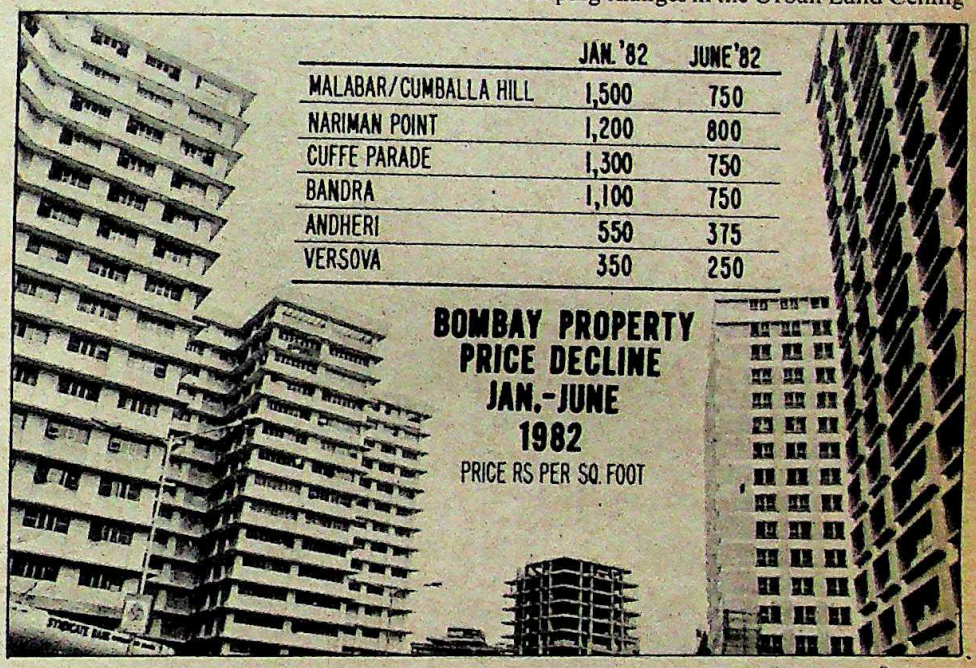
early last January, property bay began a slow retreat from igh of 1981. Accelerated by the laharashtra chief minister A.R. had held up all building ac- vate the housing shortage, the ed when it became apparent vernment was determined to using problem. By last month the city were down by 35 per e 1981 level, and indications downturn would continue.

mp: Said L.K. Satyamurthy, a ember of the Association of ustries of Maharashtra: "Prices by at least a third but there are s. In Nariman Point's com- ct the rate per foot dropped to Rs 800 in six months, but are still going begging for

Added K.M. Goenka, gest builder of low cost hous- the speculator and the builder their stocks in the hope that recover. But by June they rate sellers since they expect a n the next four months."

the high-priced Malabar and districts had already dropped per cent. Even at 50 per cent December's rate, a Camballa development was last month tyers. Rates per square foot in residential area of Cuffe llen from Rs 1,200-1,400 to Rs Bandra's Linking Road area to roughly Rs 750; in sub- i from Rs 550 to Rs 375; and rampy suburb of Versova, 22 city centre where prices had 350, there was a prompt fall by

n: Although the price crash builders and property specu- es, the inevitability of a slump had existed for some time. There was little economic justification for the sky-high real estate prices of 1981 which were caused almost entirely by speculators cashing in on the shortage scare. Taking off on a vertical spiral late in 1978, land and building values in Bombay rose in the three years that followed by a giddy 800 per cent. Explained Goenka: "There was no relationship between cost of construction and flat prices, no justification for this hyper-inflation in land value. It was entirely a result of cornering by a cartel of investors, speculators and builders, who bought up the entire stock of no objection certificates (NOCs) and then pushed up prices by trading flats among themselves." By the time the crash finally came, flat prices in Bombay had reached such an unrealistic level that they were beyond the purchasing powers of most consumers.



	JAN.'82	JUNE'82
MALABAR/CUMBALLA HILL	1,500	750
NARIMAN POINT	1,200	800
CUFFE PARADE	1,300	750
BANDRA	1,100	750
ANDHERI	550	375
VERSOVA	350	250

Large-scale speculation in real estate really began by end 1978, when a nation-wide cement shortage gave investors a glimpse of the coming boom. But land availability in Bombay under Sharad Pawar remained steady, since over 1,100 plots were granted NOCs for construction. With Antulay's entry, cement supplies were gradually choked off and a blanket ban placed on NOCs. Cleared plots were promptly mopped up by a cartel of builders—including Rizvi Builders, the Raheja Group, Lokhandwala Construction and Ajmera Builders—and the bonanza had begun. Compared to a rise of roughly 150 per cent in flat prices between 1978 and mid-1980, prices shot up during Antulay's 19-month tenure by as much as 350-500 per cent of the 1978 value.

Changing Picture: By end 1981 the boom was finally over. Antulay's continuance in office was threatened by the exploding cement scandal which had helped boost flat prices; these had reached a level where sales were severely limited. Worried about the uncertain future of their investment, speculators stopped their hectic purchasing. Antulay's downfall in January was followed by a series of governmental measures which compounded the potential crash. The cement decontrol in February made the material freely available, and building activity in Bombay spurted. The Central Government hinted broadly at sweeping changes in the Urban Land Ceiling Act to make it more effective, and a budgetary amendment of the Income Tax Act made it possible for the Government to take over flats which were sold at under-invoiced values after July 1.

By June, Babasaheb Bhosale's Government in Maharashtra had got into the act. Switching around completely from Antulay's policy-making methods, Bhosale on June 4 called the first cabinet sub-committee meeting for the grant of NOCs in two years. In the fortnight which followed, at least six meetings were called, a number of clearances issued, and a commitment made to clear all routine building and redevelopment applications in the next three months.

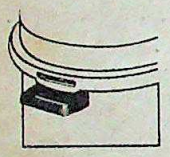
Transition: Strongly recessionary trends nation-wide also helped to bring down flat prices in Bombay. Since commercial finance was drying up under the state-engineered credit squeeze, Bombay's money market finance was diverted to high interest loans to traders and wholesalers. Almost Rs

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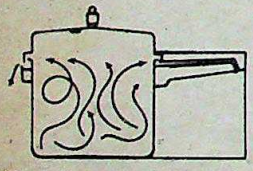
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New Prestige



What is the GRS?
The Gasket Release System is a unique design innovation that makes pressure cooking as safe as boiling water. A slot in the lid over the rubber gasket provides a safe, sure outlet for steam when it reaches dangerous levels.
The GRS makes the New Prestige the only totally safe pressure cooker.



How does it work?
All pressure cookers use steam to cook food faster. Sometimes more steam than is needed builds up inside the cooker. Under normal conditions this is let off from the weight valve on the top. If this vent gets clogged with food it could lead to an eruption.

In the New Prestige, on the rare occasion when steam builds up excessively, the GRS enables the rubber gasket to expand and stretch out of the slot and let off the steam downwards safely.*



Why is the GRS essential?
When you replace a safety plug you may get a spurious one. This will not work in an emergency. Unfortunately you have no way of telling a genuine from a spurious safety plug. Why take a chance?

THE GRS NEVER FAILS TO WORK



The GRS does not interfere with the normal cooking process.
No, not at all.
There is nothing to replace. All you do once the steam is let out is push the rubber gasket back into the slot with a spoon, clean the vent and use.

The cooker that even a child can handle — that's what the GRS makes the New Prestige.

*Gasket Release System

A tick P

Prest



the people who in
pressure cooking

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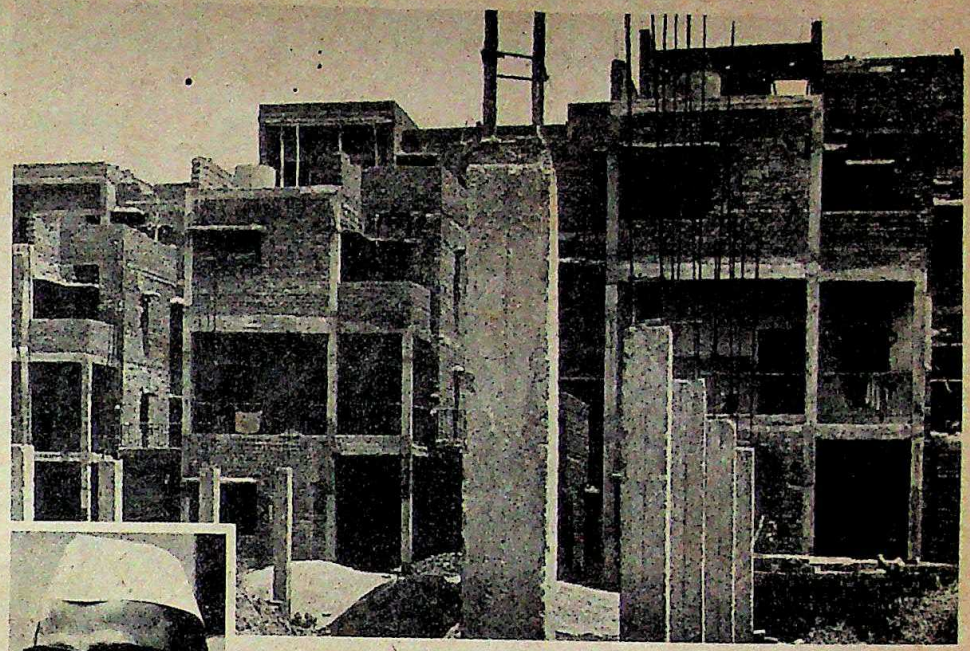
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—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

Room

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g gap between the supply



A DDA housing project and (inset) Singh: no clear solution

and demand for housing in Delhi has pushed the Government to admit the private builders: according to DDA's own estimates over 2 lakh flats will have to be built to meet the shortfall. In addition, at least 40,000 more will have to be built annually to strike a reasonable balance between supply and demand. According to REPBA, the cost of meeting just the shortfall would be Rs 2,800 crore if 80,000 flats are constructed annually.

The private builders also criticise the land utilisation records of the various government agencies. For example, of the 76,450 acres of land which was acquired by March 1, 1980, only 44,960 acres have been put at the disposal of the DDA. And the 6,900 acres that were transferred to the DDA by the Central Government's Land and Development Office have not been developed for residential purposes. In terms of people the figures are stupendous: over 1,50,000 people have already registered with the DDA and another 12,000 have applied for registration.

Plans: Almost in acknowledgement of the shortfall, V.S. Ailawadi, vice-chairman of the DDA, says: "Our main objective is to increase the housing stock in Delhi as rapidly as possible. Though the DDA has been able to bridge the gap, a lot more has to be done to keep the prices under control." Concurs Bhishma Narain Singh, minister for works and housing: "Since provision of houses to the needy is one of the most important issues in our prime minister's 20-point programme, we have to explore all avenues to ensure its implementation within a reasonable time."

The Government has decided to sell plots of residential land of five to 10 acres to select private builders who will be allowed to build flats and sell them at market prices. The private builders will also create sewage systems, street lighting, water supply and other civic amenities.

The DDA has, however, laid down certain conditions. It has suggested to the Ministry of Works and Housing that private builders should allot a fixed percentage of the flats in consultation with the DDA. It also successfully opposed the ministry's move to carve out larger plots—20 to 60 acres—in order to limit the activity of the private sector. The DDA also wants private builders to cater exclusively to higher income groups.

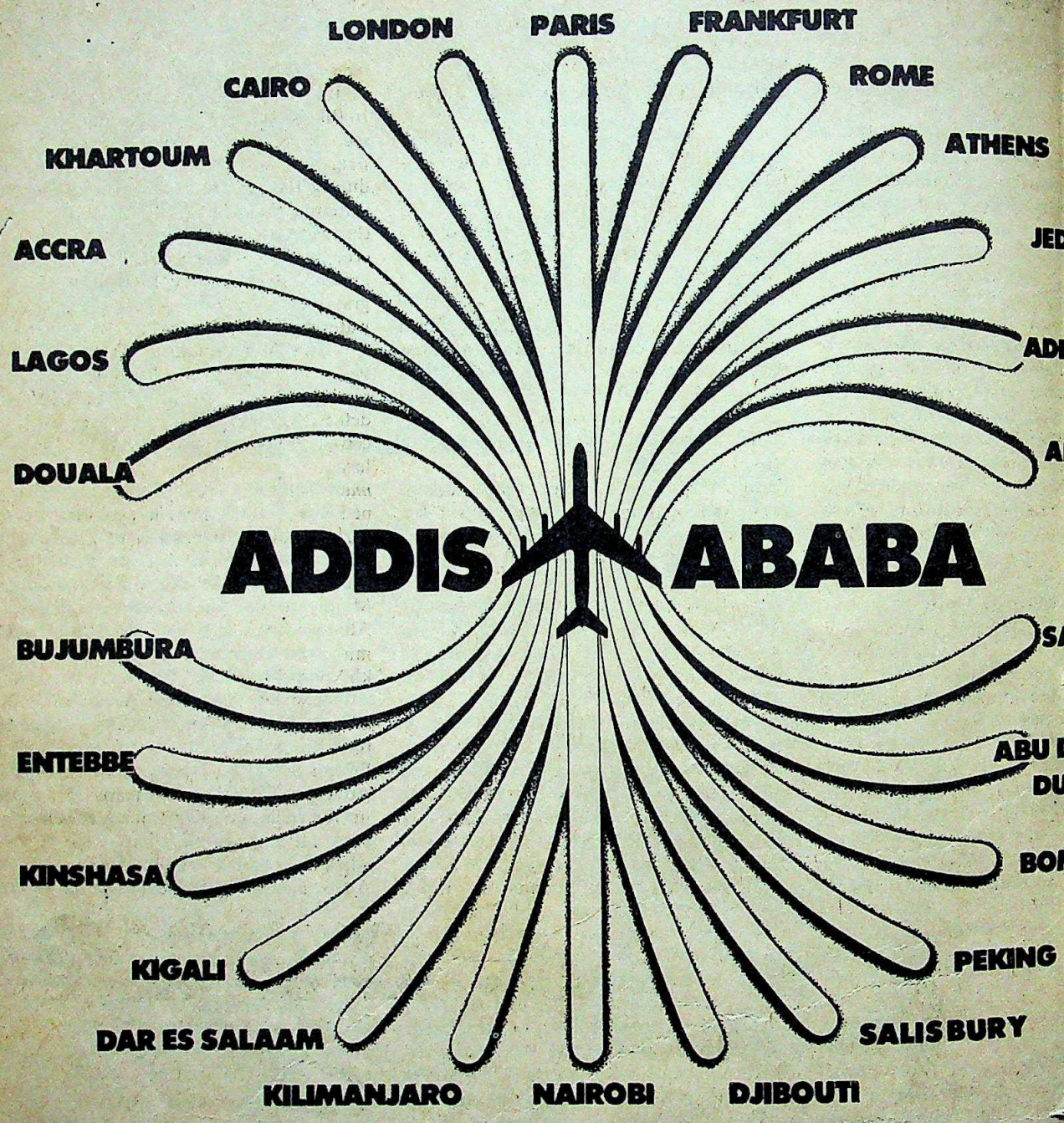
The DDA's willingness to dilute its monopoly can be understood in the context of steadily mounting criticism of its operational delays and pricing policies. The DDA's price of Rs 180 to Rs 200 per square foot for ready-to-occupy residential accommodation is already beyond the reach of all but the upper-middle class and the affluent. Private builders are expected to charge even more. In fact, space at a residential complex some 30 km from New Delhi in neighbouring Haryana is currently being sold by private developers at Rs 265 per square foot. In addition, there is no guarantee that the private sector will, in fact, live up to expectations. Its record in providing commercial properties is hardly inspiring, and the shortage of new commercial space—which has been left open to private builders—is chiefly responsible for the sharp rise in rents. Clearly, no solution is yet in sight for the capital's long-suffering citizenry.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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soon Blues

are times when India looks ible, bursting with food sto- d blessed with a government s gung-ho about its work- rain gods do not work to a 20- me, and last fortnight wea- ountry over were developing ecks as they stared hopefully lue and mercilessly cloudless

the mandarins of the Department and the Union nistry were besieged by me- termed as the most severe drought this century by a ological Organisation sym- ical droughts in Delhi last fficially, meteorologists voi- 1982 could very well be even 9.

production during 1979-80 l year starts in July) dropped drought to a dismal 109.7 rom 131.9 million tonnes the The last two years have been omparison—output rose to nnes in 1980-81 and then to nes in 1981-82. This year's fore optimistically pegged at nnes.

Ahead: That target now ant. On July 4, Agriculture irendra Singh glumly told e parliamentary committee ministry that the monsoon normal". That could be the of the decade. The monsoon did arrive on time over Trivandrum, and was a week late over Bombay, Nagpur and Calcutta. After that it has vanished like a wraith.

Says Dr P.K. Das, director-general of meteorology: "This year the monsoon retarded after June 17. We had, of course, given the Agriculture Ministry ample warning of this in early June." This grim situation had been preceded, in April and May, by sporadic and unseasonal rainfall over much of north-west India. That, coupled with a few devastating hailstorms, severely damaged the rabi wheat crop. Estimates of the loss vary between 5.5 million and 7.6 million tonnes. Western Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana were hit particularly badly.

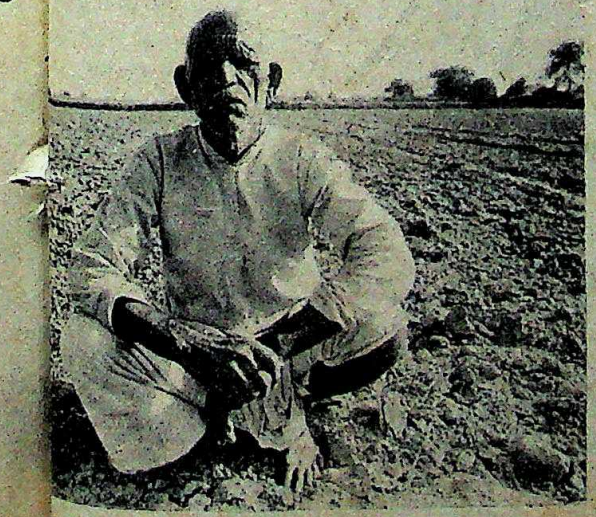
Meteorologists say the unseasonal rain may be one of the "complex chain" of factors responsible for the scarce rainfall now. As though in direct proportion to the plunging graph of precipitation, the wholesale price index has been shooting upward. From 274.3 on April 24, the wholesale price index shot up to 287.2 on June 26. While the Government bravely denies that it is even thinking of going in for wheat imports, the domestic markets are licking their chops about the shortages ahead.

Scanty Rainfall: The drought has already wreaked havoc in some states. In Orissa, where a cyclone in early June left damage worth Rs 115 crore in its wake, a prolonged dry spell has resulted in severe scarcity. Rajasthan has been hit by drought for the fourth year in succession; although the Centre has so far granted aid worth Rs 170 crore to the state for drought relief, 57 per cent of the rural population and 23,246 of a total of 33,305 villages have been badly affected.

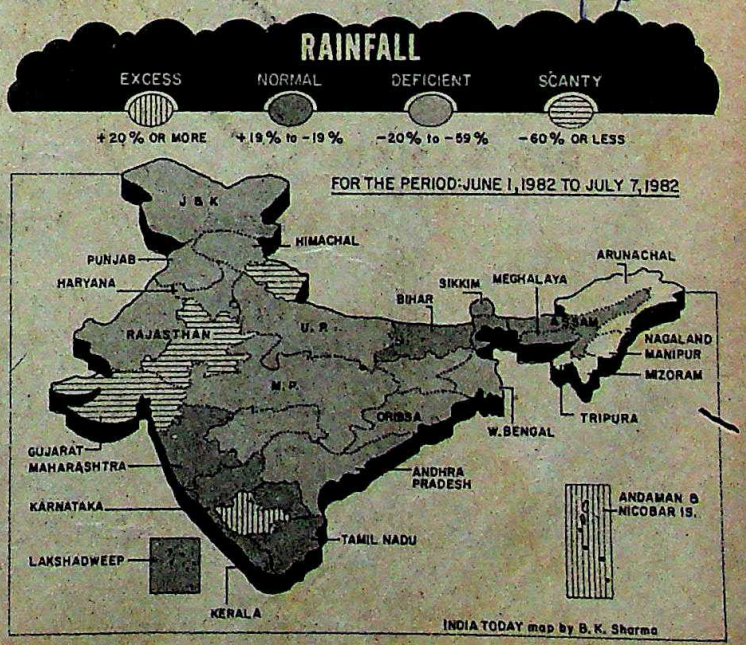
In West Bengal, 13 of the state's 16 districts have been gripped by drought. Nearly two-fifths of the jute crop has been destroyed by unseasonal and scanty rainfall. In Bihar, there has been poor rainfall for the second year in succession. Beset by lack of irrigation, farmers who had sown their crops during the pre-monsoon showers are now watching the seedlings dry up and wither in the heat. More than 50 per cent of the maize crop has been wiped out. Everywhere, the tardy progress of the food-for-work programmes and the shortage of even drinking water have added to the gloom.

The Meteorological Department divides the country into 35 subdivisions for rainfall charting. Of these, 16 have received deficient rainfall this year, three have received very scanty precipitation and only 14 have received 'normal' precipitation (*see map*). Although the Government had planned to put more areas under high-yielding varieties, and to increase fertiliser consumption and the increase of seeds and credit, the situation so far, says a senior Agriculture Ministry official, is "extremely alarming". All the states have now been told by the ministry to prepare contingency plans for the kharif crop.

Remedial Measures: As early as May 1979, before the drought had struck with full force, the then agriculture secretary, Dr M.S. Swaminathan, had prepared a Disaster Preparedness Plan. Detailed plans were drawn up for each state to minimise the damage, save cattle from perishing, and preserve whatever kharif crop was standing. Although the Centre spent more than Rs 150



er glumly surveys his parched fields: cause for alarm



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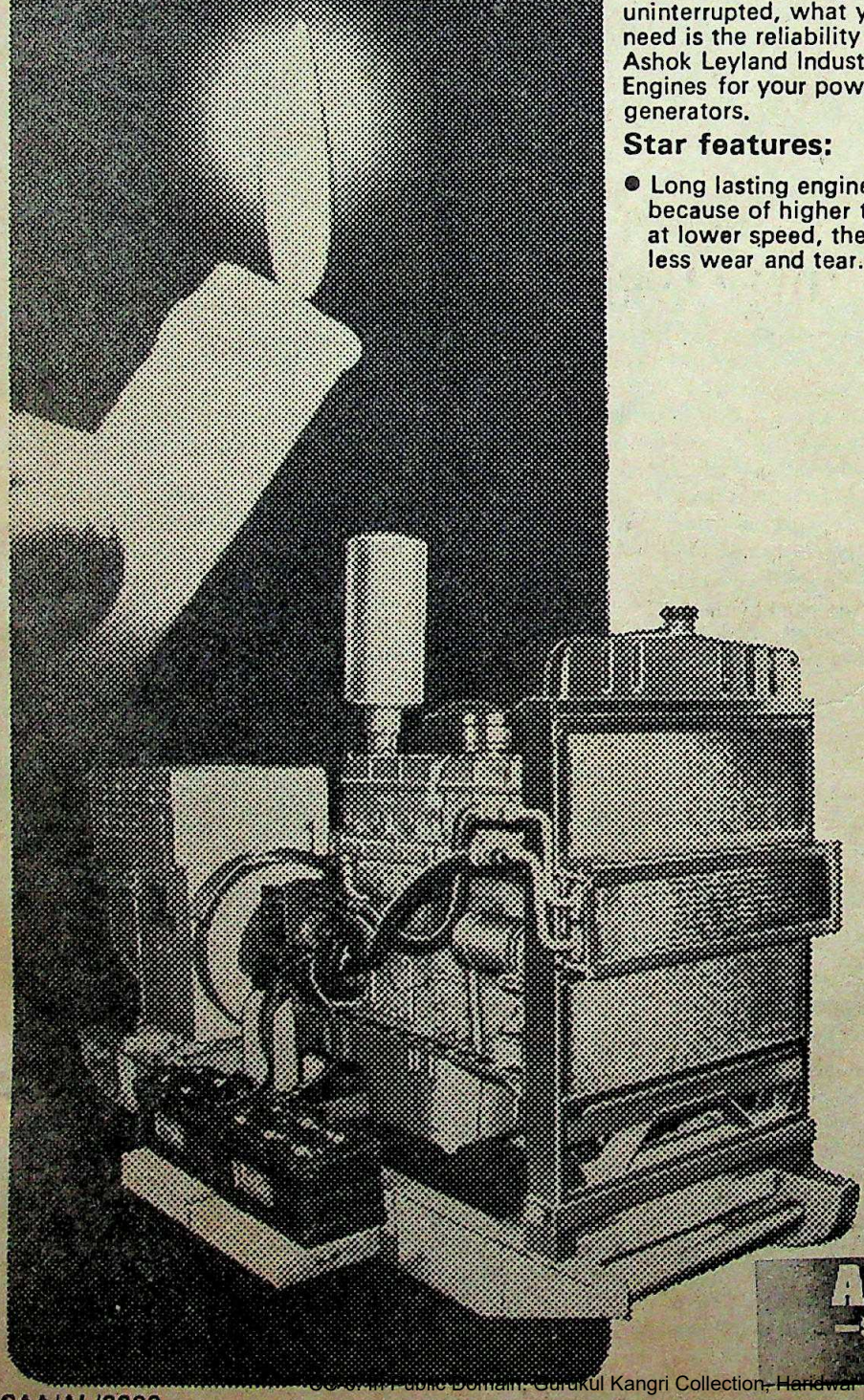
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—CHAITANYA KALBAG



An apple tree destroyed by storm in Jubbal: hail-hit harvest

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Bitter Fruit

STILL reeling from two years of drought, Himachal Pradesh's farmers have this year been struck by a surfeit of rain. Agriculture has been the hill state's perennial Achilles' heel—almost 90 per cent of the population depends on farming and allied sectors. Because of scanty rain last year, only half the state's apple trees flowered this season—and they have now been attacked by the dreaded scab disease. As for dry ginger—mainstay of Sirmour district—the loss this year is estimated at 30 per cent.

Coupled with the unseasonal rain in April and May were destructive hailstorms that felled many fruit trees in the tribal areas of Kinnaur, Pangi, Chamba, Lahaul and Spiti. Estimates of the damage are that a total 2 lakh trees have had to be written off, and 5 lakh trees have been partially damaged. Chief Minister Ram Lal says that the estimates are very rough since the terrain is so difficult to survey. "But our fear is that the loss will exceed Rs 50 crore," he told INDIA TODAY.

Last year, Himachal Pradesh produced 3.42 lakh tonnes of fruit valued at Rs 60 crore. Says Agriculture Production Commissioner B.L. Negi. "This year has been the worst so far. We are particularly worried about the effect on the state's economy." Drought or crop damage usually result in starving farmers, a tax deficit, and poor development. Om Prakash, 40, of Mahog in Chail district says: "Interest rates may jump to 40 or 50 per cent now. Banks and cooperatives after all meet only our limited demands, and many farmers will now be forced to fall back on the *sahukars* (moneylenders)."

Heavy Damages: The damage so far has been extensive. Gram and lentil crops have been wiped out, wheat has suffered heavily and an agriculture department report in June said: "In the valley areas of Paonta, Solan, Una, Kangra and Mandi, the grain has shrivelled. The lustre and weight has both been lost." There have been no buyers for the wheat reaching the markets. "But we will buy the wheat, whatever the quality," says Ram Lal, "because ultimately we have to rescue the farmers."

Opposition leader Shanta Kumar and independent MLA Major Vijay Singh Mankhotia however dispute these alarmist opinions. "The farmers are experiencing tremendous problems in disposing of their produce, particularly in the merged areas of Kangra, Hamirpur and Una," says Shanta Kumar. Adds Mankhotia: "The apple growers' lobby is very strong, and the chief minister is a prominent member. No patwari has so far ventured out to assess the actual loss to the ordinary agriculturists."

While farmers scoff at relief measures announced by Revenue Minister Sat Mahajan, the problem occupying everybody's attention now is the maize and paddy prospects. Last year, the state had produced 5.23 lakh tonnes of maize and 1.24 lakh tonnes of paddy. Delayed sowing this year could mean considerable losses—and a valuable month has already been lost. In every way, it has been a grim way for Ram Lal's Government to begin its future.

—GOBIND THUKRAL in Simla

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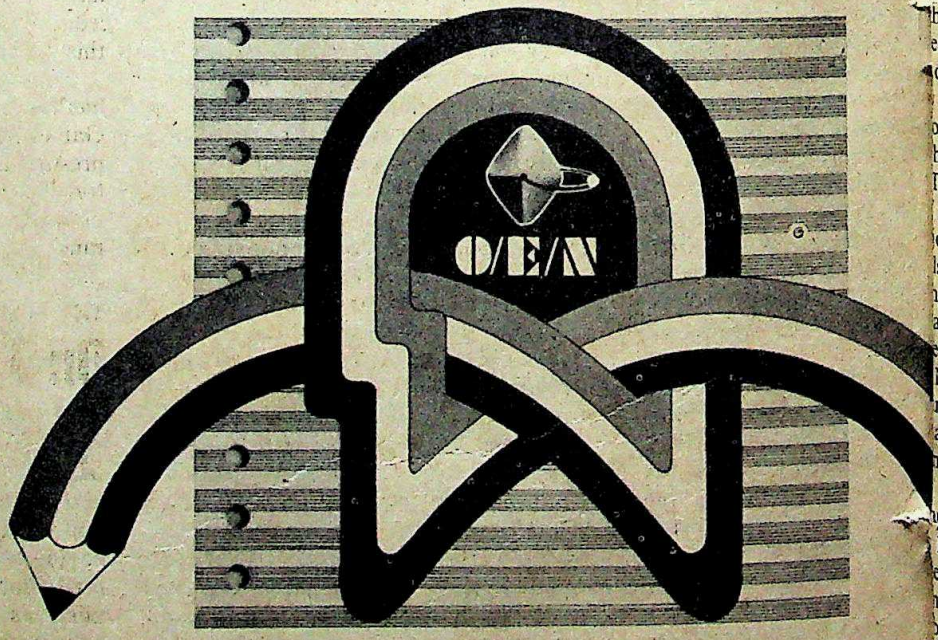
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ntry has suffered a revenue loss of over Rs 60 crore due to illegal import of over 60,000 sets during the last three years alone. Besides, a few leading TV manufacturers have taken undue advantage of loopholes in the import policy. Permitted to import only TV kits at concessional duty for limited indigenous production of CTV sets for training purposes, they have been buying complete TV sets and dismantling them in Hong Kong or Singapore. Later these sets are imported at less than one-fourth of the import duty and sold with a 'Made in India' marking.



Sathe and Singh: pipe-dreams

The point not yet made is that with *ad hocism* in the chair, far-sightedness is at a premium. The crucial determinant of Sathe's policy has obviously been the time factor. If tapping lucrative sources of foreign exchange to generate income for investment in much needed avenues were the prime consideration, then the choices for a developing country like India would be very many. This path is, however, hardly likely to make for a strong indigenous industry. This is why bureaucrats in South Block opposed a policy that did not examine its own ramifications on the plea that it would adversely affect the indigenous small-scale sector.

Chimerical: In the I & B Ministry's plan, the boost to indigenous industry is projected not as a reality but as a hope! Hailed by the Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, C.P.N. Singh as "a major breakthrough in this vital communication network", the Sathe plan stipulates the export of CTV sets worth over Rs 500 crore annually during the Sixth Five Year Plan. This despite the fact that the Union Cabinet has postponed its decision on the import of appropriate technology for the indigenous production of CTV sets. Said Sathe: "Even small countries like South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore can export electronic goods worth over Rs 1,000 crore individually. I am sure that with our talented technical manpower, we have the capacity to export electronic goods worth over Rs 500 crore over the next five years." Perhaps, but it seems rather chimerical.

The trail of controversies is not exhausted yet. In 1981, when the Asiad demand for CTV was initially raised, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) put out a trial run of a few CTV sets manufactured by it with an import content of Rs 1,250 per set. Since the sample sets were found satisfactory, Central Electronics Limited (CEL) and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) started negotiations with CSIR for indigenous manufacture of CTVs.

But before ECIL and CSIR could sign a final agreement the Union electronics department intervened and spiked the proposed deal on the plea that it had not evaluated the efficacy of the technology before authorising ECIL to start CTV production. The Central Government announced the new import policy without even formally rejecting the CSIR technology. The CSIR scientists believe that by opting for the import of kits instead of technology the Government has closed doors for future growth of indigenous technology. Says a scientist: "TV manufacturers will find it more profitable to dump obsolete technology on India instead of evolving their own based on modern trends." Dr G.S. Sidhu, CSIR's director-general attacked the import policy in the presence of Mrs Gandhi last fortnight when he said: "Many a time we have received not only a second-hand knowledge but also reconditioned equipment. Yet this policy continues."

An assiduously nurtured pipe-dream has become a short-term reality. With the Games being planned to vindicate national prestige and the administration's capacity for efficiency, as the greatest public spectacle of our time, the question which continues to rankle is: "After Asiad what?"

—PRABHU CHAWLA

THE MARKETS

On The Move

IT IS not clear why the market has picked up, but it certainly seems to be on the move once again. It could be just a flash in the pan, but it could also be that its worst doubts about recession are over, these having been settled once and for all by the forthright statements of finance and industry ministers last week. The Government believes that all that has happened is that a sellers' market has been turned into a buyers' market and this should ultimately help the consumer as well as the corporate sector. Company chairmen are not, however, used to buyers' markets and fear that they may not be good for their profits. However, the credit squeeze has apparently come to stay—recession or no recession—and companies which cannot or will not adjust

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TIVE STOCKS

High 1982	Low	Close 5.7.82	Change on Fortnight
59.00	32.00	36.00	1.50
377.00	212.50	278.00	(5.00)
64.00	46.00	54.00	(1.00)
1,650.00	1,325.00	1,350.00	(85.00)
49.60	36.00	38.90	2.10
467.00	352.00	369.00	1.00
42.00	26.50	30.00	3.00
33.70	26.80	30.10	0.60
65.00	53.00	61.00	1.50
80.00	62.00	63.00	0.50
18.69	16.44	18.19	nil
24.70	20.20	22.20	0.55
18.60	15.30	15.50	nil
346.00	217.50	224.50	(8.50)
220.00	177.50	190.00	(5.00)
1,020.00	865.00	983.50	13.50
25.00	18.10	18.70	0.20
44.25	41.50	42.00	nil
168.00	80.00	84.00	1.50
16.20	11.65	11.90	(0.20)
44.50	31.31	33.28	1.97
21.70	18.30	20.70	1.50
20.00	16.50	19.00	1.50
41.00	26.00	26.00	(2.00)
49.87	34.25	38.00	2.38
46.50	35.75	42.00	(1.00)
48.75	38.00	41.00	0.50
30.00	25.40	27.25	0.95
37.20	30.20	30.75	(0.25)
506.00	368.00	390.00	(3.00)
49.20	30.00	30.90	0.30
56.00	48.00	49.50	0.50
32.14	21.82	25.24	2.76
28.00	23.00	23.00	(0.50)
23.60	17.00	17.40	0.30
25.20	18.90	19.50	0.10
247.50	172.50	200.00	20.00
26.00	20.25	20.60	0.20
107.00	50.00	54.00	3.00
35.00	26.00	28.00	(1.00)
35.90	26.20	27.90	1.55
150.00	125.00	145.00	4.00
45.00	29.50	29.50	0.50
28.70	21.00	28.70	1.00
36.00	28.75	30.00	0.20
73.20	55.6	58.20	2.10
54.00	45.10	49.25	2.45
150.00	115.00	119.00	(6.00)
35.75	20.00	23.75	1.00
86.00	45.50	46.75	0.25
16.50	14.50	14.90	0.40
61.00	38.00	40.50	nil
17.50	11.00	11.20	(0.50)
36.50	22.50	24.00	0.75
210.00	168.00	173.00	1.00
63.00	33.50	34.50	0.50
48.50	34.50	38.30	2.10
30.30	27.00	27.85	0.35
97.00	58.75	58.75	(2.25)
407.00	303.00	318.50	5.50
29.75	21.00	26.25	1.25
58.25	34.00	34.00	(1.50)
177.00	118.00	144.00	(3.00)
29.00	27.30	28.80	1.20
66.00	34.00	35.50	1.50
47.62	41.37	44.69	2.88
16.60	12.60	12.75	(0.25)
31.50	19.00	19.50	nil
59.00	45.50	50.00	nil
429.00	310.00	353.50	(37.50)
737.00	400.00	400.00	(42.00)
70.75	35.75	39.50	1.25
28.10	23.90	24.20	0.10
33.50	24.10	25.80	nil
291.00	228.00	236.00	nil
26.50	19.10	19.50	0.40

themselves to tight cash situations are going to have a rough time.

According to reports, there has been a fourfold increase in capital raised in the open market and the number of new company registrations has also gone up substantially. Six large industrial houses, including such well known groups as Tatas, Birlas, Mafatlals, Goenkas and Guest Keen Williams are making a bee-line for Punjab for a number of new industries, including electric typewriters, computers, bearings, soda ash and fertilisers. It is possible that the state offers facilities over and above those granted by other states; but the fact that so many new industries are in the pipeline is itself a sign that the recession is a temporary phase that will soon pass once the corporate sector has psychologically adjusted itself to the financial crunch.

Not all companies, of course, will be able to manage this; but diversified companies are better placed in this respect than others. Take a company like Hindustan Lever, for instance. It has a fairly solid base in the household consumer market but is also throwing up new shoots in other related fields. Its technical base is also strong and so is its marketing capacity. Hindustan Lever is a good example of a self-reliant manufacturing unit whose growth is almost entirely dependent on its own internal resources. The fact that its parent company, Unilever, has been allowed to keep a majority control must also be considered an added attraction from the investor's point of view. The scrip is quoted around 50, and with a bonus issue on the cards in the course of a year or so, should be high on any shopping list.

Credit Squeeze: The Tata Steel dividend fell flat on the market; but the Bombay market always over-reacts to Tata Steel which is not the scrip it used to be and is no more a sensitive indicator of the market's mood. Steel itself is not a very crucial industry: in Britain, the steel industry is in a mess, many units, some as big as Tata Steel, having been closed down; but this has had little effect on the British stock market which, despite the Falklands, is still riding high. Telco is also down—it reached the year's low last week. But Telco, like Escorts and Mahindra & Mahindra, is caught in the credit squeeze and the fall should not be taken as representative of the market's condition. All these three scrips are attractively priced but they are still not out of the woods, because the squeeze has not ended.

In fact, what really keeps the market up is the steady procession of convertible debentures. The debentures and the shares seem to react on each other helping keep both ends up, which is a sign that the bond issues are really making their presence felt.

WORLD VALUE OF RUPEE

Country	Unit	Currency	TT Selling Rates (Rs)	TT Buying Rates (Rs)
Australia	1	As $	9.7690	9.6672
Austria	100	As Sch	55.0222	54.4438
Bahrain	1	Dinar	25.7644	25.5755
Bangladesh	100	Taka	43.4462	43.1273
Canada	1	Can $	7.4629	7.3821
Egypt	1	Egp £	11.6211	11.5358
France	1	Fr Frc	1.3970	1.3813
Hong Kong	1	HK $	1.6234	1.6071
Indonesia	100	Rupiah	1.4767	1.4659
Iran	100	Rial	11.2895	11.2066
Italy	100	Lt Lira	0.6950	0.6884
Japan	100	Jap Yen	3.7476	3.7040
Kenya	1	K Shilling	0.8834	0.8739
Kuwait	1	Dinar	33.4134	33.1681
Malaysia	1	ML $	4.0623	4.0190
Mauritius	1	Rupee	0.8734	0.8670
Nepal	1	Rupee	0.7320	0.7267
Netherlands	1	D Glds	3.5065	3.4681
Pakistan	1	Rupee	0.8182	0.8122
Singapore	1	Sing $	4.4590	4.4108
Spain	100	Sp Pt	8.6287	8.5482
Sri Lanka	1	Rupee	0.4686	0.4652
Sweden	1	Sw Kr	1.5686	1.5520
Switzerland	1	Sw Frc	4.5514	4.5002
Tanzania	1	T Sh	1.0133	1.0058
Thailand	100	Baht	42.1720	41.7941
UK	1	Pound	16.5947	16.4460
USA	1	US $	9.7300	9.5950
UAE	1	Dihram	2.6226	2.6033
USSR	1	Rouble	12.9173	12.8225
W. Germany	1	DM	3.8759	3.7878

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo Ltd, New Delhi and quoted between the banks on July 7, 1982.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

	Latest	Change on month
PRICES		
ET Commodity Price Index		
July 5, 1982*	244.1	3.1
Cereals	232.0	1.1
Chemicals	278.4	7.2
Industrial Fibres	179.8	5.0
Metals	327.2	(4.3)
Sugar	225.2	(6.2)
(Textile Yarns	222.1	nil
Vegetable Oils	277.4	7.1
Gold standard, July 5 (Rs per 10 gm)	1,635.00	(30.00)
Silver, .999 July 5 (Rs per kg)	2,540.00	(60.00)
SHARES		
ET Share Price Index		
July 5, 1982*	220.1	2.3
Cement	130.9	(2.9)
Chemicals	180.2	2.3
Engineering	360.2	6.1
Fertilisers	176.2	0.4
Man-made fibres	442.6	8.0
Paper	436.9	26.8
Rubber Goods	130.5	6.1
MONEY		(per cent)
Money Supply, June 4, 1982		1.1
Bank Deposits		1.2
Foreign Exchange Assets		(12.3)

*1969–70 = 100

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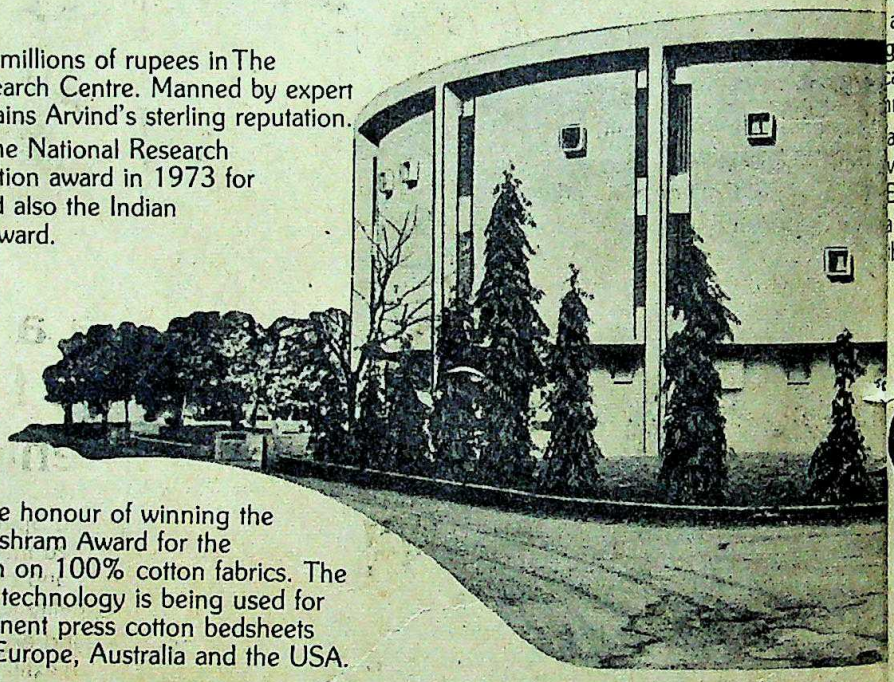
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Arvind Mills infused new life into erstwhile Lakshmi Cotton Mills that had c due to financial and marketing pro a year, 'Ankur' turned the corner to

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TRIBAL ART

A Prize Collection

A BUSINESSMAN in Raipur has what could easily be the best private collection of tribal art in the country. And yet Niranjan Mahawar is barely known outside his city in south-east Madhya Pradesh. He has received no reward or recognition and the press has hardly, if ever, reported his achievement.

In his sitting-room the burly Mahawar, 44, is surrounded on all sides by pieces of art that are piled high on the shelves. Says he: "Every available place in the house has been taken up by them. They are in every nook and corner, cupboards and trunks." For Mahawar, they represent 20 years of labour during which he has travelled widely in the sprawling district of Bastar (area: 39,000 sq km).

Early Start: Today, Mahawar possesses some 1,400 tribal art objects, nearly half of which he has unearthed in Bastar which lies adjacent to Raipur district. The remaining are from Chhatisgarh in east Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal. They include gods and goddesses, combs and hairpins, utensils and ornaments, weapons and tools, pouches and musical instruments.

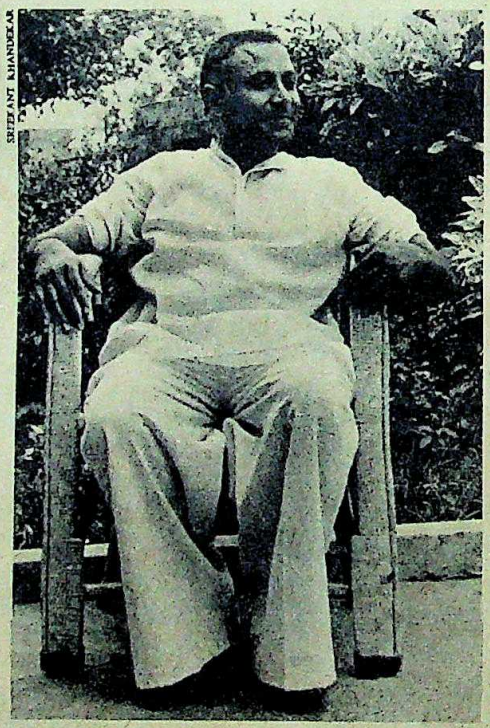
At the age of 24 he went to Jadgalpur, district headquarters of Bastar, to manage the family's rice mill. On his trips back home he used to buy small tribal art objects as mementos for friends in Raipur. Says Mahawar: "I began to realise that whenever I tried to go back to an area and procure another piece of a kind I had got earlier it was rarely available. The obvious conclusion was that tribal art was not in as great profusion as imagined and that it was in fact dying out. And that started me off my collection in an attempt to preserve what remained."

Mahawar, who is also an artist and sculptor, then began touring Bastar in an attempt to get in touch with the roughly 225 artists in the district. He also visited deserted temples in the interior and spoke to families who possessed these art treasures.

Origins: Mahawar says that in the strict sense it is a misnomer to use the expression 'tribal art' for such objects since tribals themselves view them as utilitarian items rather than works of art. Objects are divided into four primary classes: totems, deities, toys and ornaments and utensils. Toys are used as offerings for the deities and utensils too are used for rituals. The material used is either bell-metal, brass, terracotta, wood or stone.

If the pieces in Mahawar's collection are exquisite it is because traditional tribal society in Bastar permitted artists to work at leisure. Most of them worked on the lands or forests and took to art only when invited by some family to do so. They would be guests of that family for weeks and sometimes months as they worked on a single item. Food would be provided for and at the end there would be, perhaps. a buffalo as payment. In effect, all items were made to order.

Commercialism: "That is no longer true," says Mahawar, to whom an entire chapter has been devoted by Dom Moraes in his forthcoming book on Madhya Pradesh. Adds Mahawar: "Commerce has reduced good artists to artisans." Since the late '60s and early '70s when the Madhya Pardesh and the All India Handicrafts Boards became active in Jagdalpur, there has been a steady deterioration in the quality of work from Bastar. Foreign orders ruined whatever individuality remained, and the artist today has been reduced to a human machine. Says Mahawar disgustedly: "Today the artist produces the same kind of piece of exact specifications over and over again. It has killed his freedom, and what is worse, he earns only the bare minimum. All this is being done in the name of promoting tribal art."



SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

Mahawar: no recognition

Mahawar's legitimate complaint against the corrupting influence of commercialisation reveals a strange situatio art has led to its deteriorati promoted on commercial lin artists would forever remain t rest of the world.

Preservation: Mahawar of his own, too. He made r into Bastar—many of them attempt to buy whatever he c three years ago he was not ce efforts would lead. In that curator from the Museum O who sought his assistance in music in Bastar, a venture w resulted in a long-playing rec saw his collection she immed that such wealth could only b museum. And that was the Mahawar seriously began co should be done.

"I have reached the poin says Mahawar. Today he faced with problems of spac and security—problems to w answer. Foreigners who to invariably visit him and, alsc ask him to name his price. He has been offered as much as single item.

So far he has resisted su bornly and comments: "Th think that anything can Although most of his pieces a years old, they are invaluab are simply no longer availa 75 per cent of all artists in engaged in manufacturing items.

Skeptical: Incredibly, foreign buyers have been ma Mahawar has not been appr any government agency. Mahawar is skeptical of assoc Government. He points to th the Museum of Tribal Chhindwara in Madhya Pra alleges that the section on culture in Bhopal's much pu Bhavan presents a distorted art.

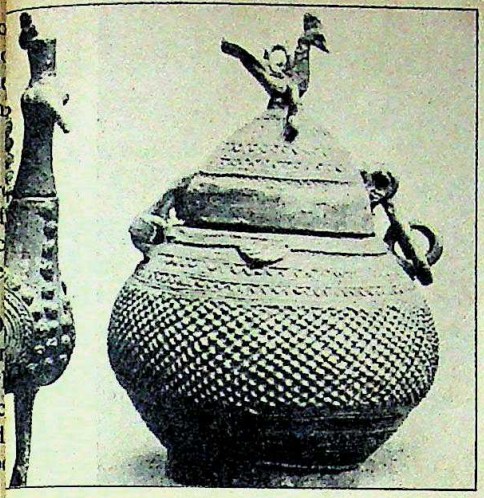
Mahawar says that th which his collection can be forming a trust in which he along with other experts, Government could provide fu it and later maintain the Mahawar points out that a pr has been set by the Dinkar K in Pune which, he thinks, coul for an ideal arrangement, th worked out later. Meanwhile passes without any concret chances of that excellent colle preservation steadily decline.

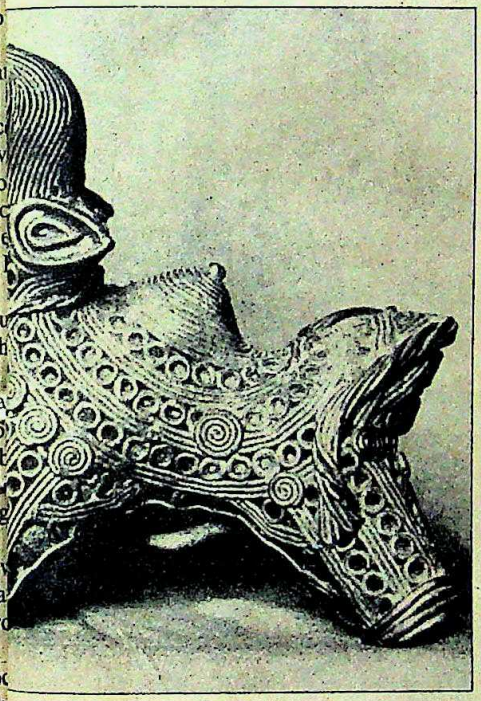
—SREEKANT KHAN

op left Bastar, r from Mavali Rajas- tta and oblems

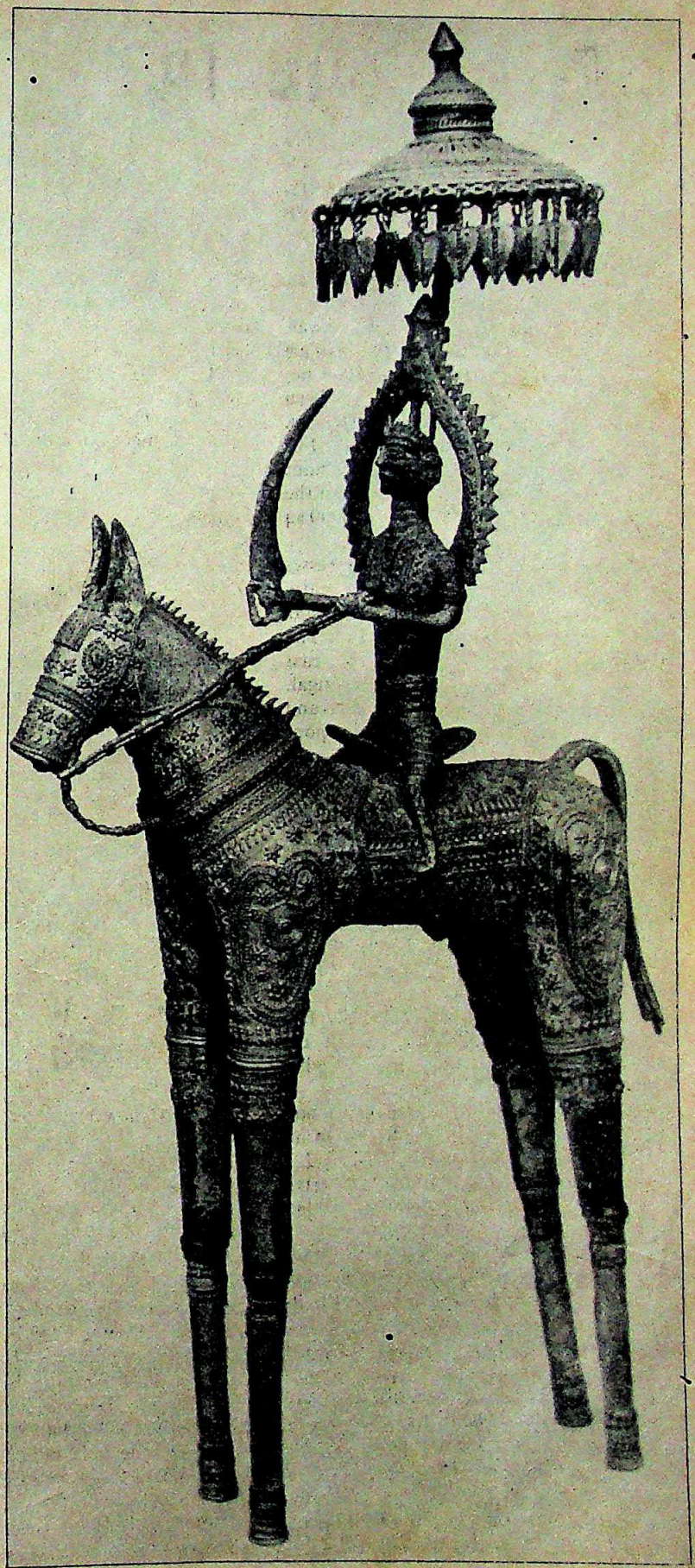
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op left
Bastar,
r from
Mavali
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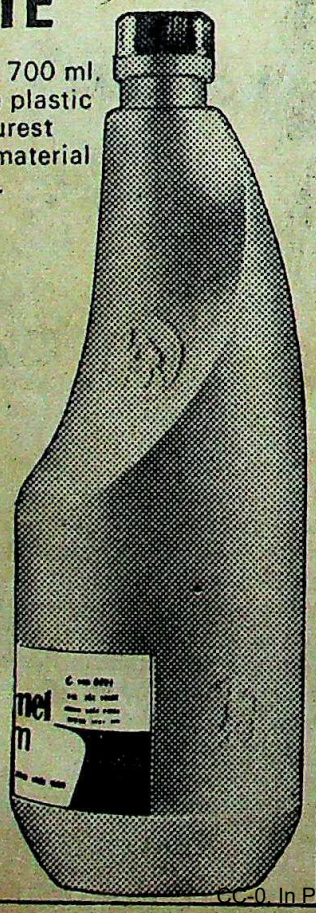
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Labels

S ON OUR TIMES
AR
ers *under the auspices of the ational Studies, Jawaharlal , New Delhi*
ges: 111

MELLOWING in his booklined retirement, Parmeshwar Narain Haksar, former all-powerful principal secretary to the prime minister, is now in doubt as regards what he should put down on his visiting card to postcrat or ex-politician! In his sar was a blend of both; olitician-gene in him was e hates the species for what tself in India, and instead "unrepentant bureaucrat". book, compiled from his Naidu Memorial Lectures ago, Haksar exhibits the crat's panache for tying nding problems, and then of finding a solution to the e present case, the readers. s the job with a rare éclat, itical, economic, technolo- c developments in the 20th rly divided subsections and the Indian situation with s compassion.

Faculty: On the surface, s a Toynbee-like sweep as on history, and scours ret out eyebrow-raising is calls for a condensing Haksar was never found ises significant questions society, and comes up with at would have seemed y not been told earlier. He ds from Wolf Ladijenisky, gh some very lengthy and ments to come up with the out land reforms we cannot and independent capitalism does not identify the forces apitalism that would not ons to be altered.

is well known, left the fter he fell from the favour. He was regarded as officials who had taken a during those unnatural h, there are expectations of some plain-speaking whenever he unburdens himself. Unfortunately he hedges and gets in too many abstractions. Only in rare paragraphs like the following is his refrain clearly audible: "We should ask that under no circumstances should the elections to panchayati raj institutions, municipal bodies and corporations be postponed. They must be held on an appointed day and time and if the workings of panchayati raj institutions tilt the balance of favour of the powerful, it is not beyond human ingenuity to create within these institutions the countervailing force of the poor, the women and the middle strata of our society."

All very good, but the subversion of the panchayati system was institutionalised by the ruling party when Haksar was saddled in his bureaucratic chair. And much of the bane in the nation's political life which he now laments has its roots in the 'golden era' of Mrs Gandhi, soon after the massive 1971 mandate. Haksar, the South Block mandarin, was himself a victim of these aberrations. Haksar, the author, can only recollect that frustration in very erudite tranquility.

Flashbacks

JAKHAN CHHOTO CHHILAM
(My Childhood)
by SATYAJIT RAY
Written in Bengali
Ananda Publishers
Price: Rs 15; Pages: 75

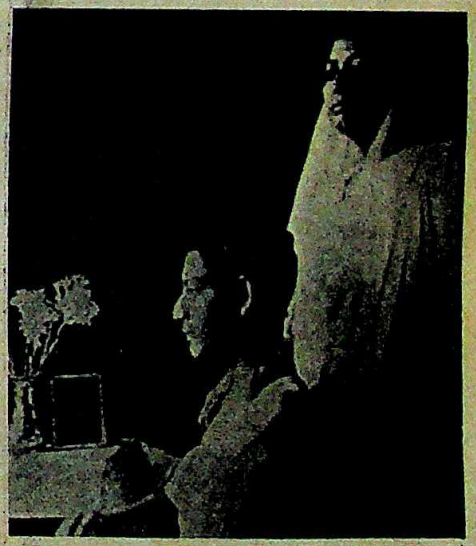


A GOOD MANY film makers wielded the pen before they took to the movie camera. Very few, however, used printed words after they had mastered the language of celluloid. And there are still fewer who ever attempted anything like writing about themselves, particularly about their childhood. The only great film maker to rise above the profession's general reticence was the 'little Charlie', Satyajit Ray's early angel. Charlie Chaplin's *My Autobiography* is at once a vivid narrative of Victorian childhood and an insight-loaded document on the evolution of one of the greatest archetypes of the silent cinema—the tramp.

Ray never developed a rheumatic finger after his legendary career in films had begun in 1955, with *Pather Panchali*. He wrote a series of essays on his craft and on cinema in general, all compiled in *Our Films: Their Films*, a book now prescribed as text in film appreciation courses all over the world. His 15 volumes of children's stories and short novels in Bengali have topped the charts for a decade. And now he has come up with an account of his childhood till age 15, written in a breathtakingly racy style, which is the stuff on which most of his later creations seems to have been made. Moreover the slim, well-illustrated volume presents delightful cameos of Calcutta between the wars.

Eminent Family: Ray was born into a family whose pre-eminence in the cultural history of Bengal was once compared by film historian Penelope Houston to that of the Huxleys in England. His grandfather pioneered children's tales in Bengali and was among the first to introduce modern half-tone printing; his father, Sukumar Ray, himself an accomplished artist, wrote children's verses and short stories that are now regarded as classics; his granduncle and uncle initiated cricket playing in Bengal.

Next to the liberated womenfolk of the Tagore family the Rays contributed the most to the state's early feminist resurgence. And, being born into the culturally pivotal Brahmo sect, Ray's family tree threw up branches that brushed at the edge of nearly every other notable family of Bengal.



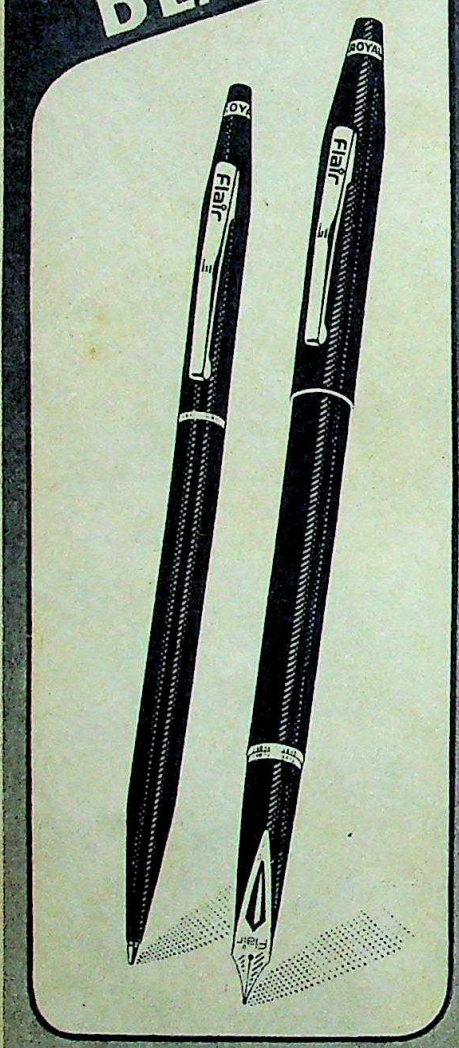
Ray with his mother: self portrait

Manik, as Ray was (and still is) called, lost his father at age two. Naturally his account might have had the possibility of getting overly mother-oriented, something that characterises the first part of Chaplin's autobiography. But Ray steers clear of it, partly because he is a more private person, and also because he inherited an infinitely richer cultural legacy. This was only enhanced by his uncanny eye for details and a memory to match.

Imperial Grace: Ray describes a Calcutta of imperial grace; its exquisite traffic of ceilingless double-deckers, Model T Fords

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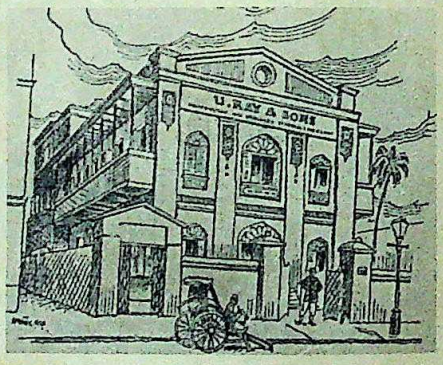
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and huge Italian cars with blowhorns shaped like a boa, its streets bustling with innocent entertainment and its cultural life replete with all the nourishments a young mind would crave for. And 'Manik's' guide to this wonderland was invariably one member or the other of the great Ray clan.

His granduncle, Kuladaranjan, the cricket enthusiast, used to enlarge photographs for a living. He would put the enlarged print on a painter's easel and put finishing touches on it with an airbrush that spouted trickles of paint. Ray describes the man working on the photograph of a dead person, with his near ones sitting in front and in tears.

Then, like rolling patterns on a kaleidoscope, he recalls the sound and smell of the block making department in the family printing press, the chug-chugging of the garbage locomotive through the heart of the city, the coded call of kite fliers challenging each other from one rooftop to another, the birdcage of a lift—then a novelty—at the ornate Whiteaway Laidlaw building, the horn gramophones and old songs and Christmas decorations.



Ray's sketch of his ancestral house in north Calcutta.

Valuable Document: These are valuable documentations of 50-year-old scenes in Calcutta, but still more interesting are some of Ray's casual observations about the religious atmosphere. The puritanical straitjacket of a Brahmo household naturally put him on a somewhat restricted mental diet. But, without displaying bitterness, he writes: "On prayer days, the floor of the drawing room would be cleared, and a crazy quilt spread over it. People sat on it for prayer and songs . . . after listening to these for years together, with my head reverentially bent downwards, I had learnt by heart all the patterns on the quilt".

Ray's future biographers will find in this volume copious clues to his development as a cinematographer because he seems to have been obsessed, even as a kid, with the laws of optics and their application. His first thrill was to look through the ground-glass viewfinder of the half-tone process camera. He still finds it worthwhile to recall the excitement of seeing inverted shadows of pedestrians on the road outside projected on the wall of his room through a peep-hole. "Free film show", he muses with glee.

He recalls the great magic shows of the times, the incessant patter of European magicians, and the frozen-faced virtuosity of one-show woman, Madam talks of the great silent film hood—*Ben Hur, Count of Thief of Bagdad*—and does no Hopper, the pianist, who wou chords sitting at a side of Madan Theatre (known as now). As his childhood became an addiction; one calculated that he must hav thing like four to five ye watching other people's film

Celebrities: He dismisses ing with Rabindranath Tago graph, and with the facsimi graph the poet had signed read: "By spending a lot of ti and travelling great distance the mountains and the sea. B my home, the beauty of a blade of grass still eludes me. recoun art te school was, Bose, ter, wh on his

came drawn gentle the mo tures the m uncles —men

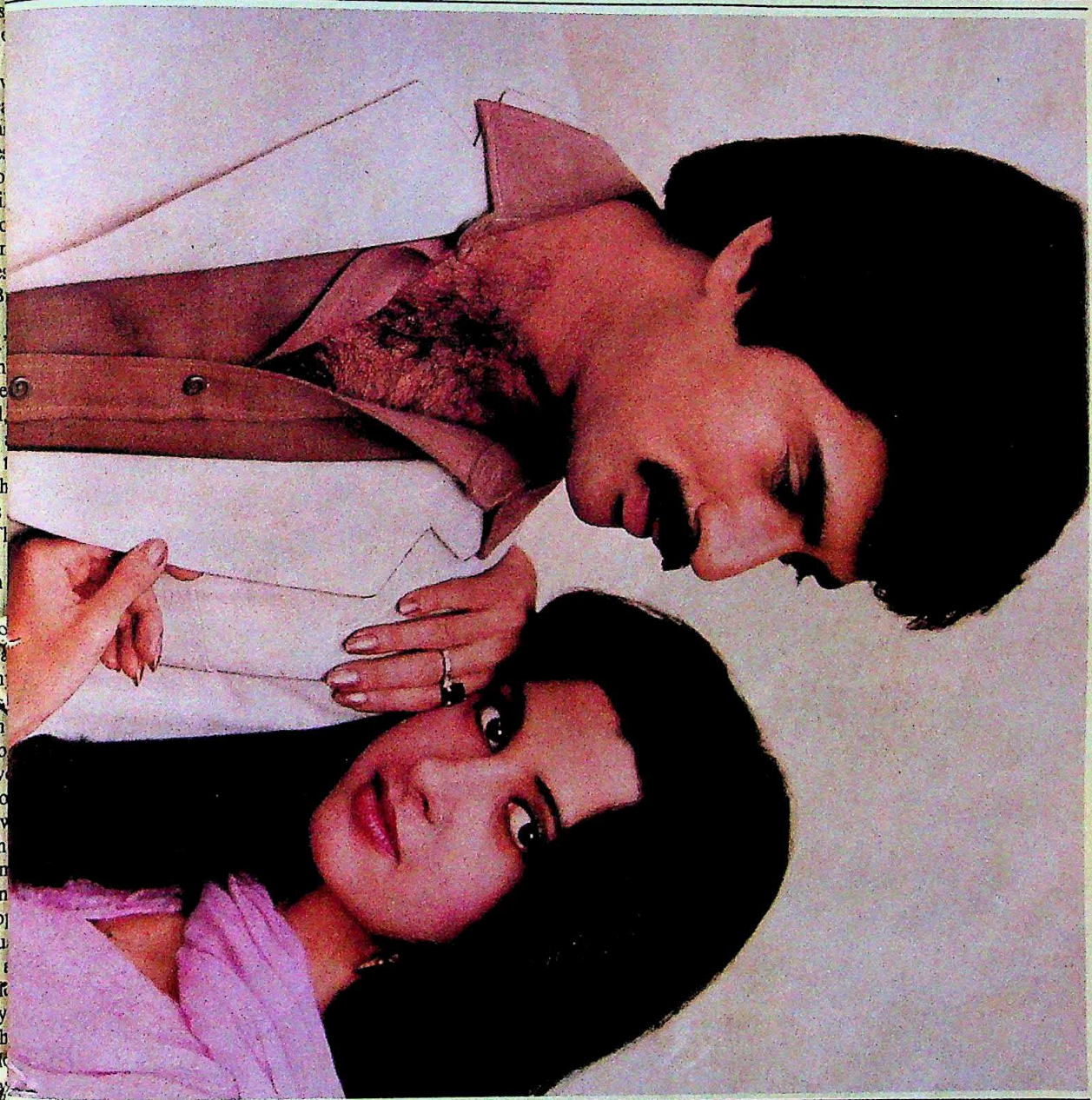
seen through the kiddy lens o One of them, for instance, w a train until he had noted do the engine. Another would and verbs in a sentence with

The book makes no seamy side of life and shows n naturally so, because it is ap for young readers. But it arou curiosity among Ray buffs gress of the artist as a chi which looks like a certainty pick up the thread from th childhood memories and hof Manik firmly in the frame and grows . . . with the DeMilles and John Fords of

But that's a truly intern in his cultural life, rounded hours of sitting through we slogging at the piano, perf designs, and assiduously dev que zest for body and mind. try that out in English, a lang uses with more felicity than h less, entertaining but sli Bengali.

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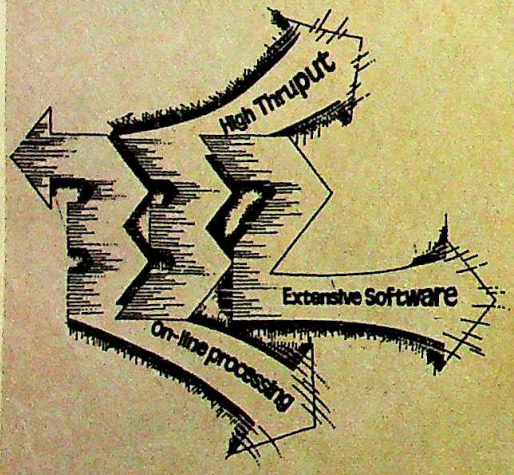
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imited Club

ZEKIEL, Mahapatra, amanujan, Parthasarthy, olatkar, Nandy, Daru- alla, Patel, Jussawalla, ehrotra, Lal, Das, Kumar. bakers dozen. Add or btract a couple of names lian poetry in English in a ave been smaller clubs. has its problems. Publi- ious one. This year the gave its annual award for ta Mahapatra's *Relation-* s arguably our finest poet his he feels is his most o date. *Relationship* was New York in 1980 but d Mahapatra was finally its first Indian edition ack. In 1958 the Writers as formed in Calcutta by friends to counter such first hed oet and t it of gic. ish- s so 298 etry eby ion as a tan- lue. last



(From left) Jussawala, Ezekiel and Nandy: problem of cross-fertilising

e ww published was *rition in April* in 1971; isagrees.) After that 1976 Oxford University Press he fray by bringing out mes and as if in response erative, Clearing House four of an equally high hen Clearing House has uple more and another ive Newground has pub- nes. Small though it is, o offer but publishers are ant.

lems: There are less tan- t are more crucial. Indians g poetry in English for rs. In 1828 Samuel Smith Derozio's *The Fakeer of* utta and reading it today ng a publisher must have been one of its less important problems. Not just Derozio but a chain of verse mongers—Michael Madhusudhan Dutt, Toru Dutt, Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya—produced an anaemic poetry because of a total failure to innovate and mould the English language to native ends. Without a thought they slipped into a borrowed rhetoric which seriously impaired their ability to describe the world they knew and adopt plausible postures within it. At the same time English verse often vigorous in it own context, became hopelessly effete when written in the pale ink of its Indian imitators.

The year 1953 signalled a change. Nissim Ezekiel privately published *A Time To Change* that year and its title announced its message. For the first time an Indian poet writing in English had consciously forsaken the easy elegance of the English tradition and had resolved to look with as honest an eye as he could summon at his world, limited as it might be to the environs of his body and self. Modern Indian English poetry began then.

It could not have been easy, being so vigorously honest and focussing so intently on the accessible alone. Much that was superficially attractive had to be resisted:

I have learnt to revel in the stone
Hard, cold, heavy, shapeless, solid stone
To turn away from all that seems to flow
Elusively; time, water, blood around the bone;

That was written in the early '50s. Since then Ezekiel has, with good reason, been less careful at times. In the early '70s he wrote a batch of poems in the clumsy English syntax of a Gujarati-speaking Bombaywalla. These were published in *The Illustrated Weekly* and won him an instant public. But they had limited value: they notably failed to transcend the condition of caricature and Ezekiel wisely realised this.

Some Strategies: Others have from time to time taken up that enterprise of cross-fertilising English with native languages. Though Pritish Nandy claims Bengali and Urdu influences, it is the bilingual poets Ramanujan (Kannada), Kolatkar (Marathi) and Parthasarthy (Tamil), whose work contains results of the experiment. In what was clearly designed to be a seminal essay *Whoring After English Gods* (1967) Parthasarthy observing that making poems was like making love announced that his affair with English was over and that he was now settling down with Tamil. His bilingualism he said was unenviable but he was going to exploit it. Today 15 years later his Tamil poems have something of the English in them and his English something of his Tamil. As a strategy it sounds attractive but whether it will come to anything is still early to say. Likewise Kolatkar's *Jejuri* (1976) brought to English the impress of Marathi *bhakti* poets: time will tell how much this is worth.

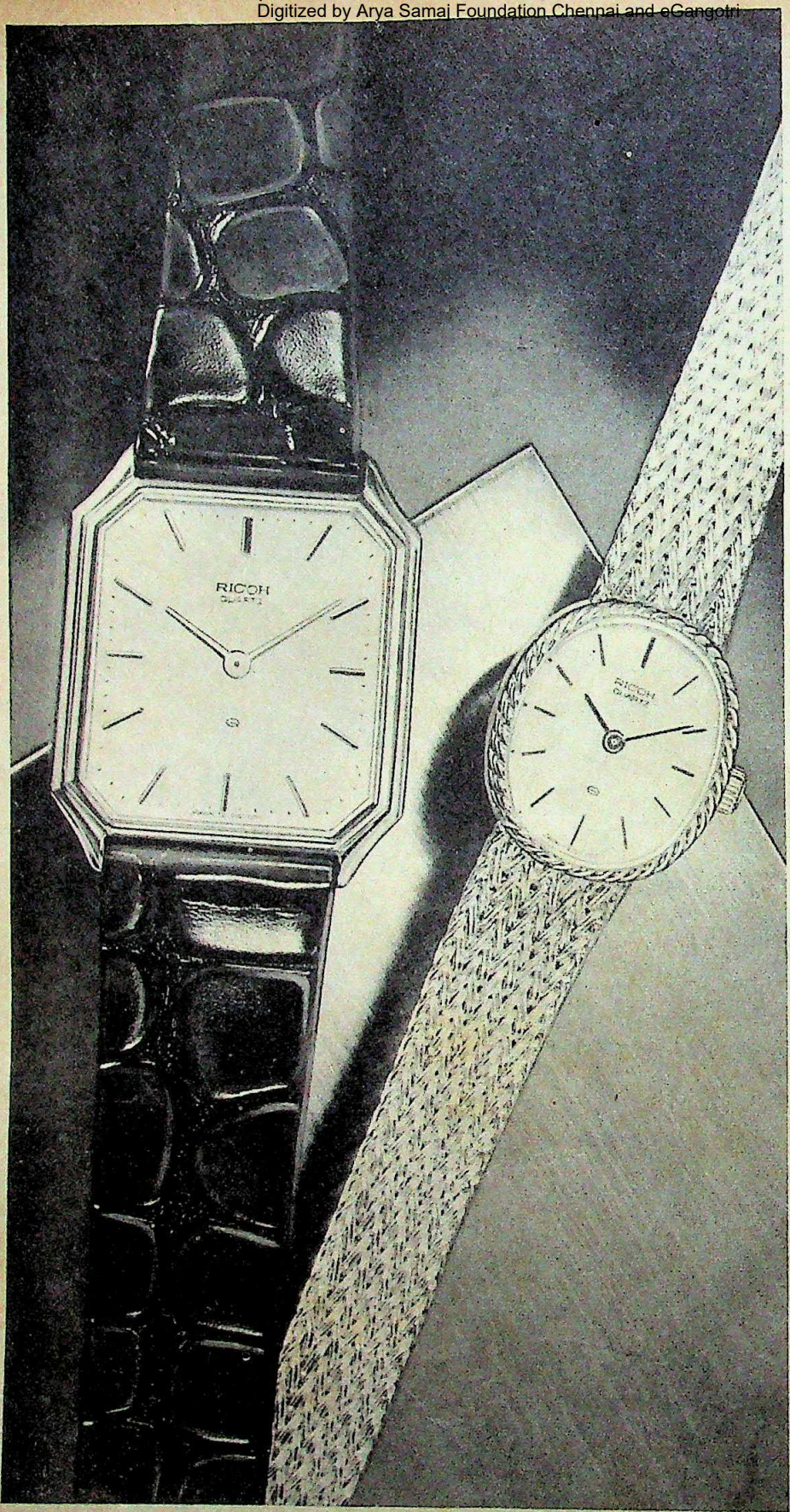
Exploiting one's disadvantages is a capital way of succeeding. American poets in this century are a case in point. Berryman, Lowell, Roethke, Plath: eschewing the portly tradition of English verse and perpetually at odds with the philistine community that spawned them they lived precarious, often disastrous, lives (frequently ending in drink and suicide) but produced enduring poetry from the very themes of isolation and loneliness. Jussawalla's *A Missing Person* (1976) tried to explore such themes. Moving from a study of the individual to a study of his isolation, Jussawalla exploited his disadvantages thereby producing a poetic testament of the cultural bastard caught between the literary traditions of two worlds.

The individual strategies differ but the problems they are designed to contend with remain the same. And they are unlikely to change. When finally the muses' club acquires its clubhouse they would do well to frame over the mantelpiece a wonderfully ironic verse from Daruwalla's poem *Dialogues With a Third Voice* in which Daruwalla's alter ego sets out these problems with a rare clarity:

Three dimensions of space, one of time,
dreams, memories, senses—your meagre
tools and a tradition that is portly.
Can you fashion reality with these tools?

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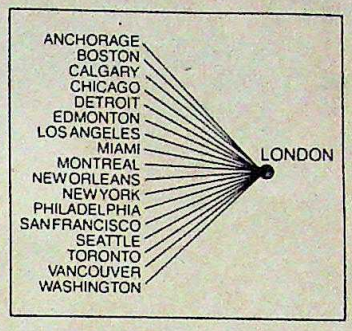
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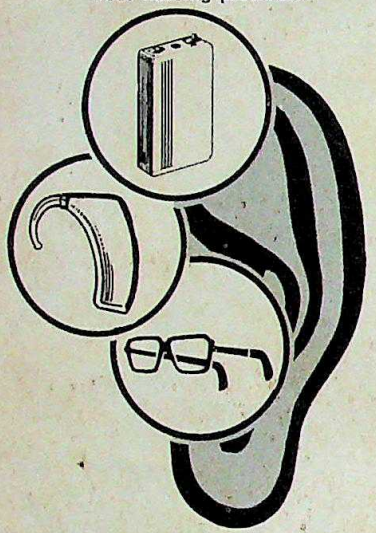
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TEXTBOOKS

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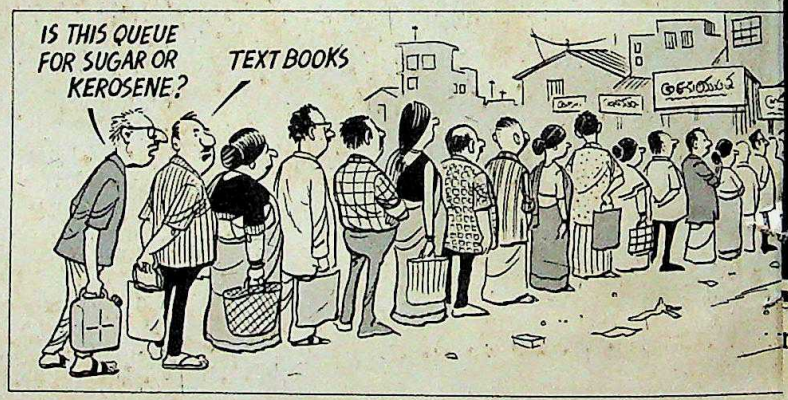
ANYTHING can be had on the country's flourishing black market —even textbooks. These entered the scarce commodities list last fortnight, when schools reopened in Orissa with anxious parents scouring the bookshops for the prescribed texts. They were obviously looking in the wrong place as is evident from the experience of Sant Jena of Pipli who said: "I ran from bookshop to bookshop for three days and then got the texts I wanted at a grocer's store." The seriousness of the shortage, however, came through only when book agents from the southern districts of the state, after waiting in long queues in front of Bhubaneswar's government-owned textbook sales depot, had their quotas slashed and went on a rampage.

The textbooks, which are produced solely by the Government, are extremely lucrative items on the black market—the laws of supply and demand being in the traders' favour. Said the Government's text-book press Manager N. Mahapatra: "So far the press has been able to print 60 lakh books against a demand of 1 crore." The books themselves are so cheaply priced that the extra Rs 15 that parents pay for a complete set does not pinch many and yet in the form of a 7 per cent commission add up to a small fortune for the dealer.

The reason for this acute shortage has been put down to the old bureaucratic ill—red tape. The textbooks for standard one to seven, the primary and higher primary groups, were delayed as the Secretariat did not clear them in time and also made several changes at the last moment. Of the 44 titles prescribed, only 30 have been printed and the rest will be available in the next two years. It has also been pointed out that labour unrest at the press, with rivalry between different trade unions growing has delayed the operation considerably.

Rising Demand: The ment's Secretary for Educ Mahapatra, while concedin Secretariat added that an in the shortage was the Statistics seem to bear out h alone 1,100 schools were o roughly now 87,000 prim primary schools in the st 5,000 of these have no bui

Ironically, the textbo been helped by an altruist state Government. A sche crore was launched to dis books among Harijans, Ad weaker sections in order to These books were printed note on the back cover sta and prohibiting their sale. A



the State Education Minist shocked to find that these notice pasted over were wi

The black market tra led to smuggling. Reports books are being smuggled states where there are size Oriyas. N. Mahapatra de racket but admitted tha English textbooks printed sold in certain parts of A

The state Government remedies. Forty centres opened and 10 more will to streamline the distribu for which the 56 sub-divisi education have been made Education Ministry have a teachers to form cooperat sponse to this has been enc the Government is able printing and distribution Oriyas will have to cont inflated price of education.

—FARZAND AHM

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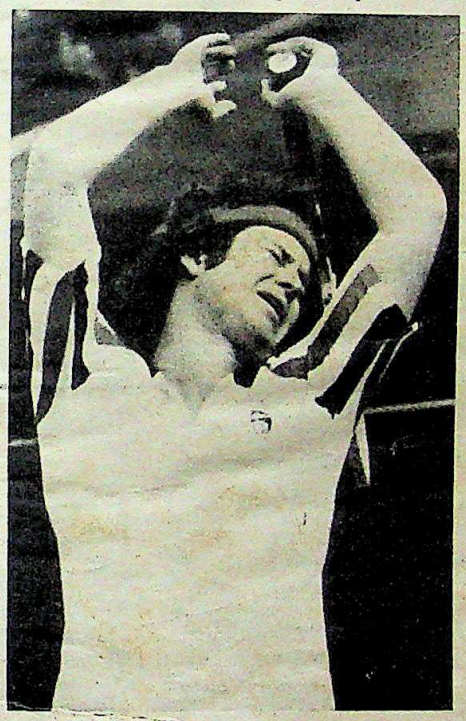
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McEnroe (left) and Connors: enlivening a lacklustre Wimbledon

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Rare Ambiance: Vijay Amritraj continued in his usual role of Wimbledon's most popular loser. Amidst the oft-repeated obscenities that have become commonplace in tennis, Amritraj's flashing smile and amiable manners make him an instant favourite. Roscoe Tanner, reputedly with his prospering oil investments, appeared not at his competitive best, beating Amritraj in a high quality, hard hitting five-setter in the third round. Both players seemed to have imbibed of Rudyard Kipling's values of sportsmanship and produced a rare, almost extinct ambiance of fun and enjoyment on the Centre Court. Earlier, Amritraj in the first round match, came back from a 0-2 defeit in sets for a spectacular victory against talented American Jeff Borowiak.

Ramesh Krishnan, playing on grass courts after two years, struggled to beat pugnacious Andrew Jarrett of Great Britain in the first round. Thereafter, the hereditary Krishnan touch became increasingly apparent. A creditable straight set, second round victory over Dowlen of the US brought him up against the burly Australian grass court specialist Mark Edmondson, the 12th seed. In a four set match, during which Edmondson chalked up a fine of US $1,000 for verbal abuse, the Australian's greater power proved decisive. The balding, mustachioed Edmondson went on to beat Vitas Gerulaitis, who missed his press conference as he rushed to a Rolling Stones concert after his match—probably to find his lost rhythm. Edmondson, crushed by Connors in the semifinals, collected fines of US $3,500 for 'verbal abuse' and US $300 for 'ball abuse' in his matches.

Shashi Menon after taming a useful Czech, Slozel in his opening match, fought hard against Tim Mayotte but in vain. Mayotte, a tall handsome American of few words, left a trail of dead seeded players with his quick fire serve and volley game. "I have a lot to learn," Mayotte said after McEnroe whipped him with a loss of only six games in the semi-finals.

Physical Peak: Left-handed Martina Navratilova easily won the women's singles crown. She had won it twice before in 1978 and 1979 but never with such authority. In her journey to the finals Navratilova did not lose a single set and only twice could her opponents collect four games in a set. At 25, she has at last been able to harness her brittle temperament and attain a physical peak to match her wealth of talent. With only one singles defeat in 1982, and with three legs of the Grand Slam (Australian, French and Wimbledon) in the bag, Navratilova seems certain to stake her claim as one of the all-time greats in the game.

Chris Evert-Lloyd, the holder, played well in the final, but failed to find inspiration in the damp trying conditions. While the highly rated teenage brigade of Tracy Austin, Andrea Jaeger and Pam Shriver fell like ninepins, Billie Jean King, the 38-year-old American firebrand added another glorious chapter to her Wimbledon story. After surviving three match points against Tanya Harford in the third round, she was only a couple of points away from her tenth final in 20 years, when she was defeated by Lloyd in the semi-finals. With her 20 Wimbledon titles and her great fighting heart, King has taken her place with the immortals of the game. But in the end, it was that nail-biting singles final that eventually salvaged Wimbledon 1982.

—NARESH KUMAR at Wimbledon

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CRICKET

England's Revenge



FOR THE Indian cricket team, which concluded its disappointing tour of England last week, it proved to be a long and gruelling summer. The three-Test series produced some brilliant individual performances but also some very obvious weaknesses and a lack of collective cohesion that does not bode well for the forthcoming tours of Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the West Indies.

To capture the triumphs and tragedies of the series and sum up India's performance in his own inimitable style, INDIA TODAY *commissioned former Indian Test captain* BISHEN SINGH BEDI. *For deadline reasons, Bedi's report was phoned in after the fourth day's play at the Oval with the final Test heading for a dull draw. His report:*

AS I WRITE this about the 1982 Anglo-Indian Test series after the fourth day of the third and final Cornhill Test, the game is headed for a tame draw. England, being already one up by virtue of their convincing victory in the first Test at Lord's, have avenged the defeat of last winter in India. A lot of dull and inept cricket was played then. According to Bob Willis, the present English captain: "After the Bombay Test, which the Indians won somehow or the other, the tour should have been terminated for there was no action at all in the remainder of the series."

I am sure Bob Willis is happy with the cricket as also the results in England, particularly so as England's captain for the first time. Not many were enamoured by the English selectors' choice of Willis. Not that he did not possess the requisite qualities. But his down physical fitness has been known to be suspect for some time and he is also known to indulge in mysterious hypnotics to keep his big, lean figure going. The usual but needless cries of "a bowler not making a good captain" were brushed aside by Peter May and company and big Bob was given the job of captaincy, perhaps more so to honour and acknowledge his great contribution to English cricket.

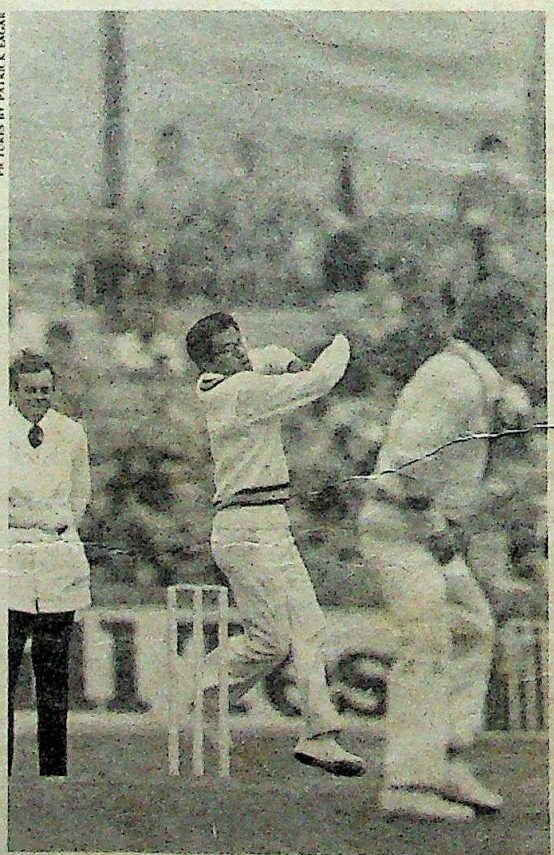
Bob is aware that his reign as captain of England is going to be short. "In the very near future somebody else has to take over, for my legs can't keep pounding in for very long," he says. "But as long as I'm out there I will give everything I have." And he is doing just that, leading by personal example. He is still by far the quickest bowler on both sides.

Controversy: What of the Indian team? How well have we fared on this tour? When the present side was picked I remember there was a lot of hue and cry about favouritism and parochialism which I thought was a bit unfair to the selectors. I also remember having written for an Indian daily that the selectors were entrusted with a job and that they were supposed to have done it to the best of their ability and knowledge. And that it was for events to prove whether the selection of the team was right.

I am sad to report now that the Indian selectors failed in their job in a number of cases. It is worth mentioning that the last Indian tour was to Australia and New Zealand in 1980-81. But several from that touring party were not good enough for this English summer. In all probability, six or seven of them may not be found good enough for future tours.

The fact is that the cricketing potential of the team as a whole has realised. Raj Singh, the cl nager and a former nat our boys "lack professi Both he and Sunil Gavaska the better side has not won. I Indian dressing-room after out of the Oval Test by a scor drive from the likely 'man o Botham. Sunil was sad and sorry for the great Indian disappointed," he said. "O collapse at Lord's decided t Losing eight tosses in a row broken left leg. What more is

Amateur Performance: Chetan Chauhan?" I asked do," he replied, and then tegorically deny that he Chetan's omission. The tw Ghulam Parkar and Pranab wanting from every aspect pation. Raj Singh is convinc



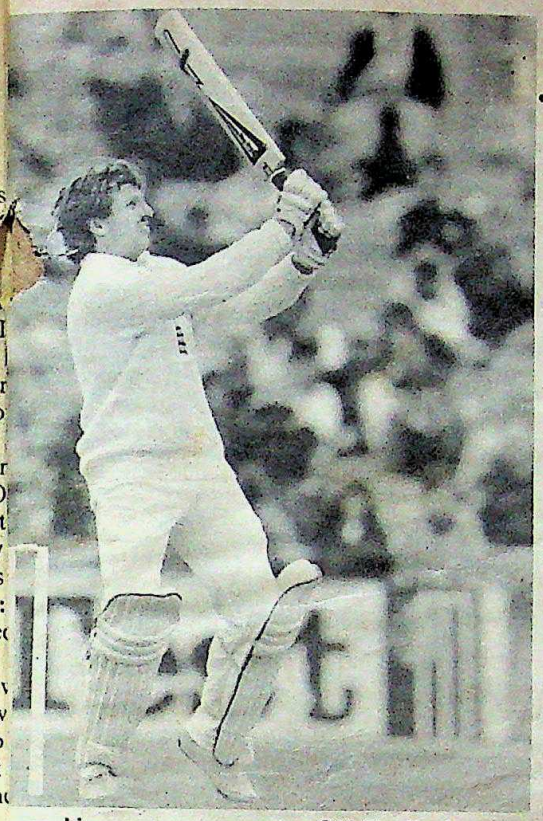
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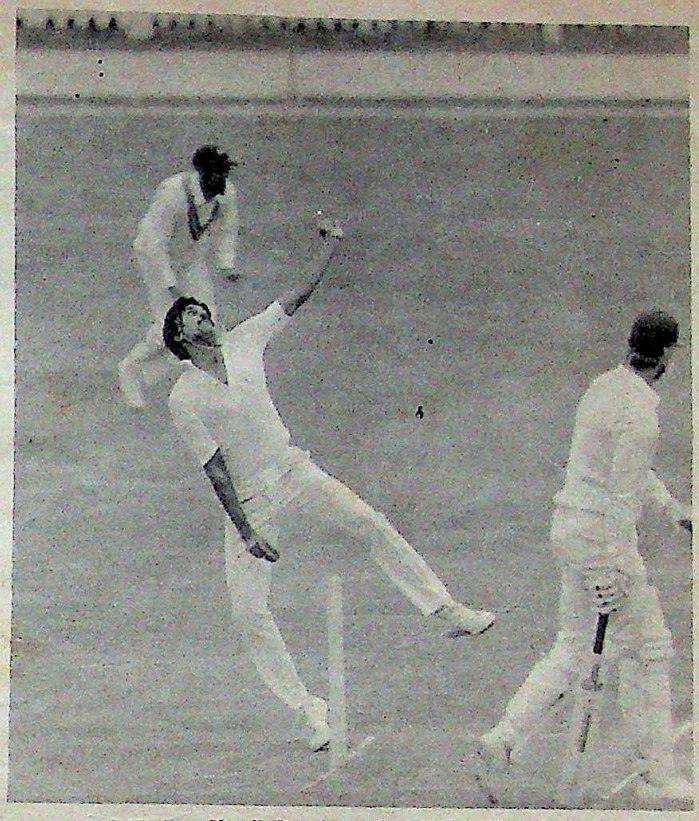
Dilip Doshi winds up before delivery at Old Trafford (above) and Sandeep Patil hits Willis for one of six fours in a single over: not enough to win

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wers his way to a century at Old Trafford



Kapil Dev in action at Lord's

don't possess "an adult necessary for survival in al sport. Our boys are still I retorted: "Only techni- e Indian manager replied

n Raj for many, many ed and lived cricket all his ensely involved with the extent of being unwanted m. He has not served the ularity by shouting and e boys, especially the h all good intentions. Raj ime has come to produce et managers in India be to instill cricketing IQ oriented physical fitness", as not up to international dicated that he meant s at all first-class levels o meet Raj with such an o. If only the team's in keeping with his own e have any disagreement? . For example, when I line bowlers had enough st matches his plain reply as to have none of the top than 125 overs before the st." I chuckled to myself t sort of yardstick do you batsmen? I have always believed that one can bowl endlessly in the nets but without sufficient first class wickets against one's name, the preparation for the Test matches is not quite complete. I would hate to think that, "in our days", bowlers were more competent.

Rising Star: I think it is more pertinent to point out that a fellow called Abdul Qadir, a leg spinner now touring with the Pakistani



Gavaskar and Willis: experienced

team, has already captured more than 30 wickets in four matches while none of the Indian bowlers has captured more than 25. And to make matters worse Shivlal Yadav and Randhir Singh never quite lived up to the expectations of international cricket. And what about Shastri and Suru Nayak? Madan Lal was, at best, a good trier and essentially a stock bowler. Only Kapil Dev and Dilip Doshi were our main strike bowlers. And that too when the conditions agreed with the captain's pre-conceived ideas.

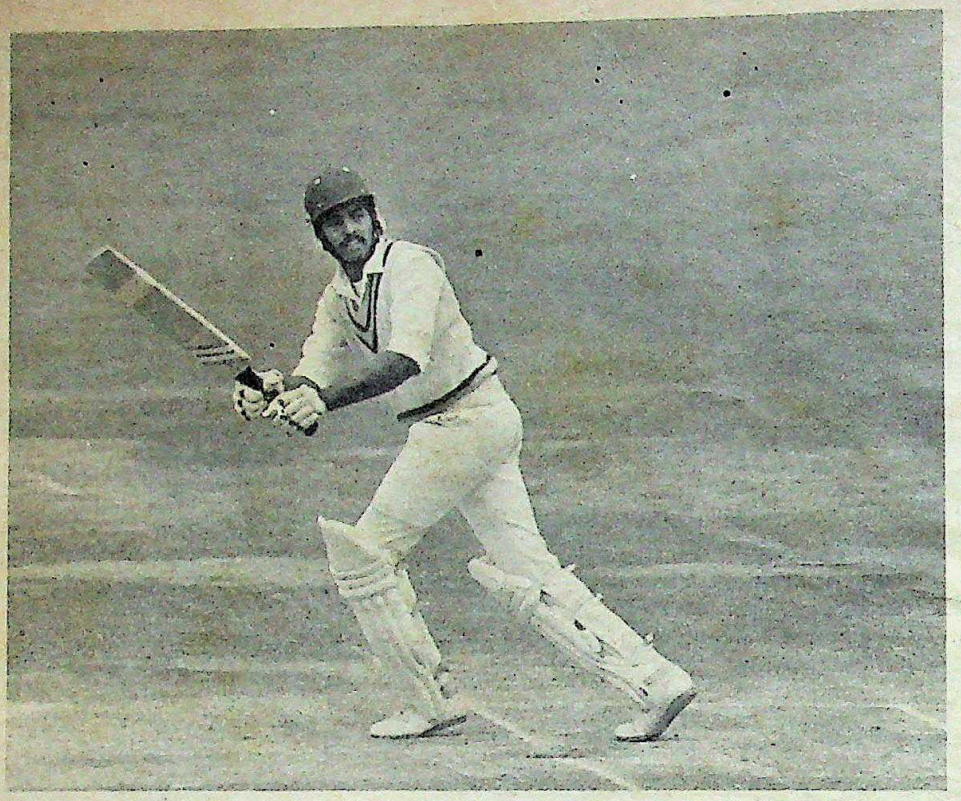
It is a matter of great shame when the team doesn't have any faith in its striking force. No matter how great the batting line-up is, it is the bowlers who are entrusted with the job of bowling the opposition out twice in order to win games. Unfortunately, we were always suffering from handicaps on this count.

Analysing individual bowlers, Kapil bowled well at Lord's and thereafter struggled to come back into the game, once the shine was off the new ball. And that is exactly what the English openers Cook and Tavare did at Old Trafford and at the Oval. Not that Cook and Tavare are the best openers around but they are doing a good job of frustrating the Indian attack on wickets which have surprisingly low bounce and no pace. And yet the Indian slip fielders throughout opted to stand a couple of yards too deep even when quite a few half chances went abegging. That was poor cricket, I thought.

Weak Links: In sharp contrast, the English close-in fielding, particularly the slip cordon, was more willing to stand up and convert half chances into reality. As far as bat and pad chances were concerned, there was not a soul with enough courage of conviction to assist the bowling. In fact, Gavaskar admits that our weakest link was our close-in catching, particularly so at forward short-leg, the position where Abid Ali and Solkar thrived and the spinners

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Vengsarkar batting during his 157 at Lord's

flourished. I do feel concerned that a thoroughbred professional like Dilip Doshi could not get the close-in cooperation of the fielders. I thought he bowled remarkably well at Old Trafford except for a number of no-balls that were credited to him. He is by far the best spinner on both sides. But I'm not sure whether he is given the confidence that a strike bowler deserves.

For some strange, inexplicable reason, Doshi and Ravi Shastri have not really complemented each other. Often a conflicting attitude by the captain has not escaped keen observation. I would have no hesitation in putting Doshi as our number one spinner. Shastri has been around for a couple of years now without quite realising his full potential. I hope I am proved wrong, but I can't really see Shastri developing into a match-winning bowler and the same goes for his batting if he keeps climbing and dropping in the batting order. I hope, for the sake of Indian cricket, that he is allowed to settle into a more permanent position. He is quite a compact batsman and very tenacious. Runs should come to him with more consistency than wickets. There are certain technical problems with his bowling which are not likely to be remedied at this stage of his career.

Except for the one collapse at Lord's, the rest of the Indian batting has generally lived up to its reputation. The unfortunate part was that after the opposition was allowed to score 400 runs or more, we were always batting under pressure. Even modest trundlers like Pringle, Allott and Edmonds were made to appear menacing, quite needlessly though.

Disciplined: Dilip Vengsarkar's century at Lord's was a gem of an innings, well disciplined and authoritative. But I can't figure out why he is so aloof from the rest of the team. I have a sneaking suspicion that he still hasn't forgiven the rest of the team for whatever happened at Sharjah a few months ago.

Sandeep Patil belted the hell out of the English bowlers at Old Trafford with an attitude of nothing to lose and everything to gain. He went for his shots from the word go and made the tour selection committee look like absolute idiots for having left him out of the first Test. He is such a natural, brilliant striker of the ball and a proven sucess at Test level as well, that a string of low scores could have been easily or conveniently ignored. Like Vishwanath and Gavaskar, he seems to possess the big match temperament and if there are any streaks of casualness in his general make-up I'm sure that they can be harnessed with proper handling. Sandeep played like a champion throughout and literally stole the limelight from England's one-man team, Ian Botham. One particular over from Willis is history now, and the England captain will have to live with it for the rest of his life.

Both at Old Trafford a
that supreme artist Vishwan
the runs. How thrilled I was f
a great Test match player an
go on forever. But the tim
Vishy to realise that he's
younger and he must loo
more. The strains of
travelling normally assc
tours are more likel
interest in anything
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Lean Period: One ho
lean period with the bat is
Clearly, the element of luck
with him. Maybe, not h
opener at the other end
pressure on him. Plus the fac
abroad is a very taxing job.
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the rest of the team are
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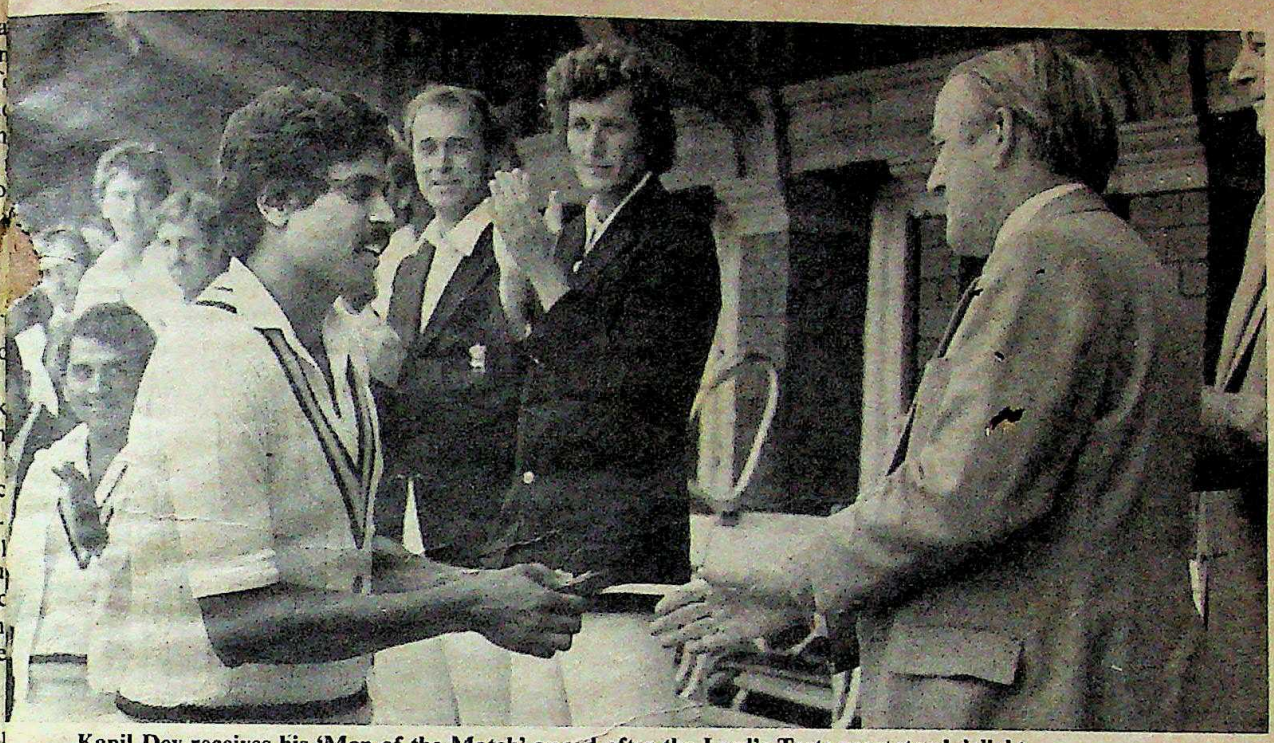
I think it is absolutely
cricketers should demand a
of commercial gimmicks. S
be cricket first and
afterwards. But, regrettably
this touring side appear to
I was sad to observe that t
"character" in the Indian
few of the senior players
"the team spirit is at a
are a lot of undercurrents
all stemming from an at
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Criticism: The select
eleven and the subsequen
bowlers have brought this, giving
severe criticism. Henry Bl
cricket writer and comme
about the inclusion of Su
third Test: "Nayak had al
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medium-paced offerings
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surely a luxury India cou
Indian selectors should
spinner Shivlal Yadav. Th
bowls occasional leg-breaks
rather than an explanati
selection and also in the wis
his bowlers, Gavaskar
Bombay, has left himself
that he is looking after h
observation coming from
makes interesting reading.

Yesterday, India was
hours before lunch waiting
clear. Such a strategy suite
they are already sitting on
Admittedly the light was
wasn't any better when p

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Kapil Dev receives his 'Man of the Match' award after the Lord's Test: spectators' delight

and inch. I would have thought grettably would take all possible risks ppear to les, like continuing to play ve that t conditions and perhaps Indian as the follow-on was saved, layers s ell of a lot of courage. The at a s en on the England team current ging declaration to India. n an atn hought of not losing was alistic gr than the stiff possibility of ne select

bsequen played yet another of his ught this, giving special treatment Henry Bl n Botham. Kapil is the only commen e present Indian squad and on of Su as not a soul on the ground k had alr begrudged Kapil his third Old T Except, perhaps, Kapil fferings ne hitter of the ball, Kapil On a pi to tighten up his defence, ndia cou demands of Test cricket. should nd, is the only difference adav. Th Ian Botham. Whereas the log-b r judiciously mixes his expla nati organised defence, the in the wie on impulsive hitting.

vaskar, re: Well, this series is over. himself o but India has not been after h re a few question marks in ng from rtment of both the teams. reading would like to confine my ndia wa n country. Ahead lies an h waiti akistan and then an equally egy suite est Indies. There is a lot of itting on the Indian camp. Tony ight wa ngland captain and now a when pl journalist made this comment after England had scored 594 runs in the first innings of the Oval Test: "After that, India's only spur was pride, though maybe there was an aroma of self-preservation floating through the dressing-room. Humiliating defeats in England are not forgiven back home, and many a selector has been known to slice off a player's head to save his own." How very true, Welshman! However, I sincerely hope that good sense and positive thinking are the main criteria when any post-mortem of this tour takes place in the Indian board circles.

One sad aspect of this Indian tour was the poor attendance at the Tests. According to Peter Lush, the chief marketing manager of the TCCB (Test and Country Cricket Board): "One of the reasons could be the poor quality of cricket played in India last winter and then the South African situation, where a three-year ban had to be imposed on 12 English cricketers, did not help." I would tend to agree with Peter Lush's honest assessment. This business of South Africa smacks of total hypocrisy. Twelve English players are forced out but there was room for Allan Lamb, a South African.

He is a brilliant cricketer, no doubt, and will enjoy the fruits of Test cricket for many years. I was amused by a remark from TV commentator Jim Laker in the Test at Old Trafford: "Madan Lal bowls a short one to Allan Lamb and the South African hooks him gloriously in front of square." The English will surely use Allan Lamb as best as they can but the blatant truth is that, like Tony Greig and Basil D'Oliveira, Allan Lamb will always remain an "outsider".

Talent Tussle: One of the most exciting aspects of this series has been the individual tussle between Kapil Dev and Ian Botham. It has been a delight to watch both these young strong men trying to outdo each other. It is always difficult to compare such talented all-rounders who are both fantastic cricketers, great competitors and have done great service for their respective countries. While Botham can boast of the support of two or three medium pacers, Kapil has to do it alone and he has done it pretty well.

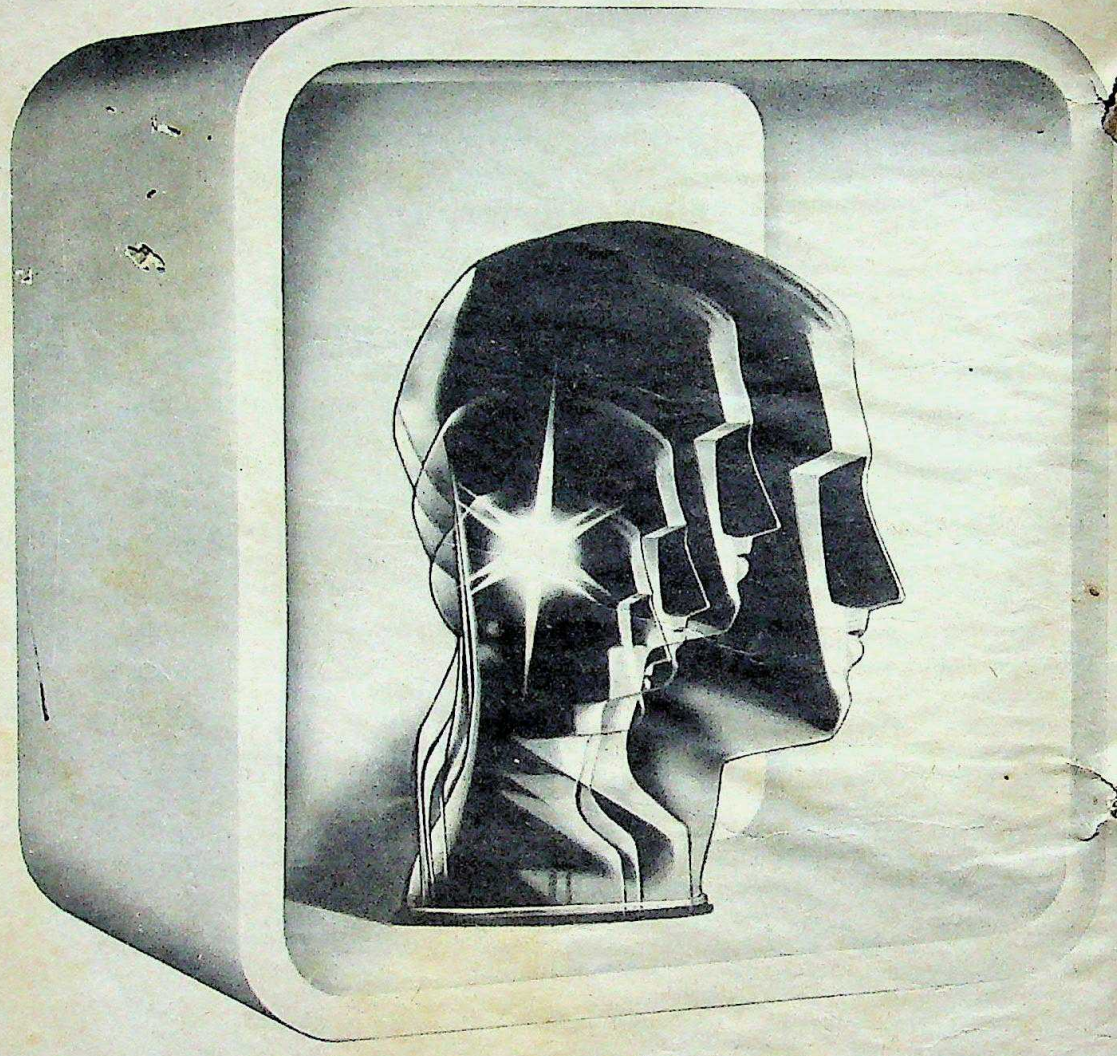
Both Kapil and Botham started out as strike bowlers but seem to be more keen on their batting now, particularly when facing each other. Generally speaking, because of the good quality of the wickets, both Kapil and Botham have thrown the bat at the ball with powerful delight. I am very pleased to note the overall improvement in Kapil Dev. He is a highly mature cricketer now and fully deserving the title of one of the great all-rounders in the game today. His youthful exuberance is a spectators' delight.

He is obviously enjoying his cricket and so are we. He is well-equipped to take on either Botham or Imran Khan for the title of the best all-rounder in the world. We would like to think he is the best but the overall performance of the team will go a long way to determine that. Kapil is at the peak of his career and exhibits all intentions of staying there for some time. For me Kapil is a prized possession of India, the Kohinoor of cricket who can't be locked up in the British Museum.

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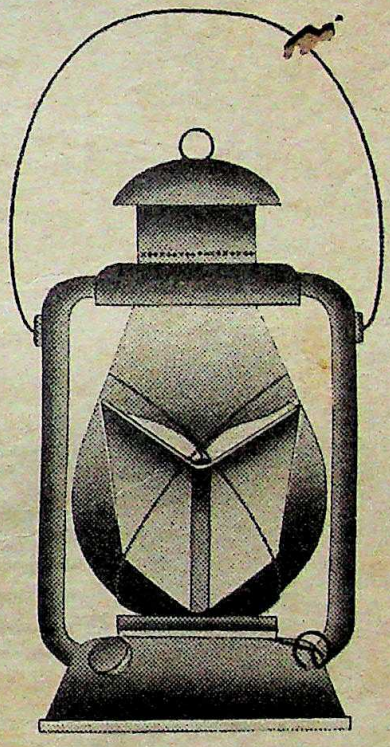
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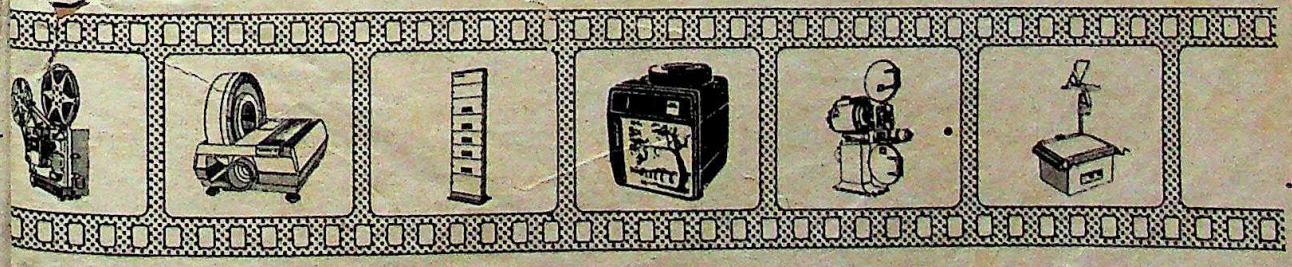
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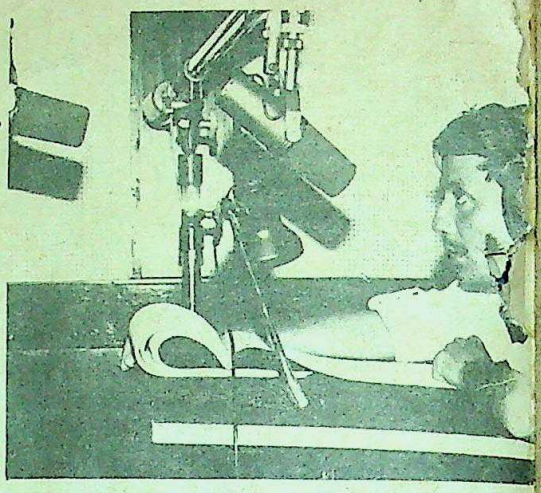
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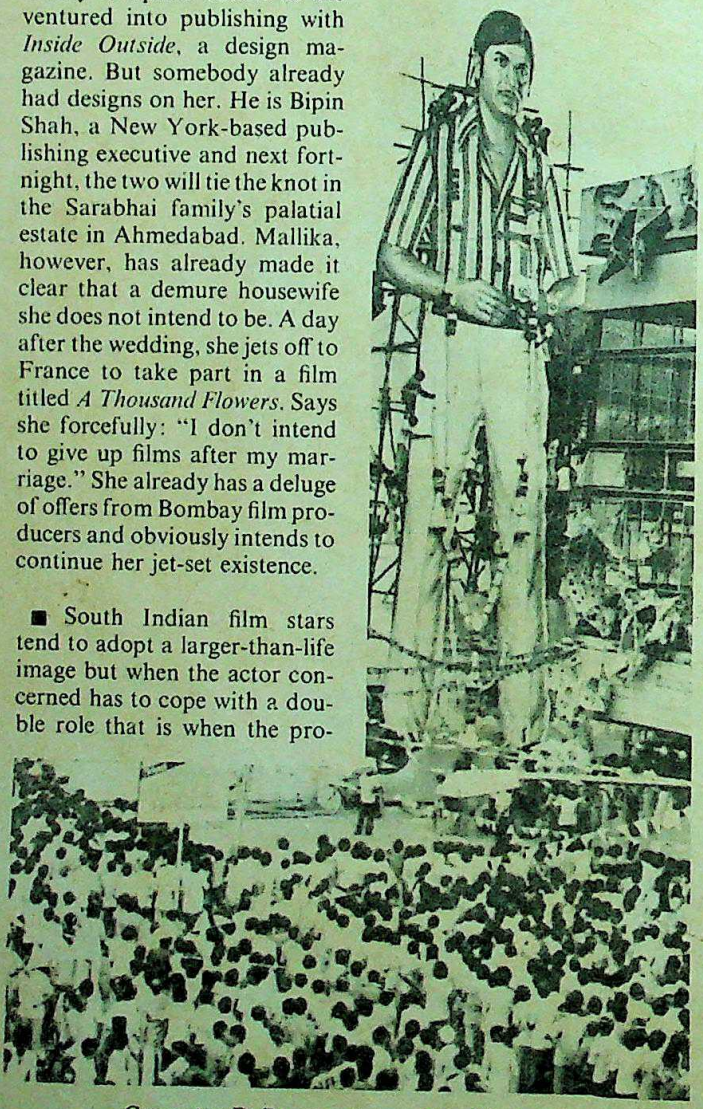
Shah and Sarabhai: it's matrimony



Kapoor: voicing the Mahatma

■ For a person brimming with as much talent as **Mallika Sarabhai**, dancing and occasional forays into films were hardly adequate outlets so she ventured into publishing with *Inside Outside*, a design magazine. But somebody already had designs on her. He is Bipin Shah, a New York-based publishing executive and next fortnight, the two will tie the knot in the Sarabhai family's palatial estate in Ahmedabad. Mallika, however, has already made it clear that a demure housewife she does not intend to be. A day after the wedding, she jets off to France to take part in a film titled *A Thousand Flowers*. Says she forcefully: "I don't intend to give up films after my marriage." She already has a deluge of offers from Bombay film producers and obviously intends to continue her jet-set existence.

■ South Indian film stars tend to adopt a larger-than-life image but when the actor concerned has to cope with a double role that is when the problems begin—traffic problems, that is. Traffic cops in Bangalore woke up one morning to discover a 70-foot-high cardboard cut-out of actor-turned-politician **Rajkumar** towering over in the main street in the heart of the city, surrounded by gaping crowds. Naturally, traffic was backed up for miles as the word spread and the crowds grew. Essentially a publicity gimmick—the actor's latest film is showing in the theatre next to the cardboard statue—there have been more people eyeing the monstrous construction than the film next door. And, for those who can only take in night shows, the statue is floodlit after dusk. The cost of the construction: Rs 28,000.



Superstar Rajkumar: larger-than-life image

■ Whatever the box-office fate of **Richard Attenborough**'s controversial film, *Gandhi*, it has nonetheless provided a major boost for quite a few members of its varied cast. One of them, strangely enough, is a little-known actor who only has a minor cameo role in the film as Pyarelal, the Mahatma's trusted aide. In reality, the actor, **Pankaj Kapoor**, 28, a Delhi stage personality, has a much tougher role to play than anyone else in the film. He has been selected from a long list of illustrious contenders, as the "voice" of Gandhi in the film which will be dubbed in Hindi. Kapoor emerged from the closed-door selection process ahead of other rivals. Said a jubilant Kapoor: "It was tough but I loved every minute of it." So, apparently do Bombay film scouts who hav luged him with o Shyam Benega Sathyu. Kapoor' voice that launcl film strips.

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